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# Friend from India

H. A. Du Souchet

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# MY FRIEND FROM INDIA

## A Farcical Comedy in Three Acts

BY

H. A. DU SOUCHET

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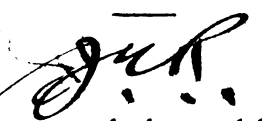

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# "MY FRIEND FROM INDIA"

BY H. A. Du SOUCHET.

## ORIGINAL CAST

| | |
|---|---|
| Augustus Keene Shaver | Walter E. Perkins |
| Erastus Underholt | Frederick Bond |
| Charlie Underholt | Edward S. Abeles |
| Tom Valentine | Charles Arthur |
| Rev. James Tweedle | Joseph Adelman |
| Jennings | Frank G. Parry |
| Bill Finnerty | John Finn |
| Marian Hayste | Marion Giroux |
| Arabella Beekman Streete | Helen Reimer |
| Gertie Underholt | Louise Galloway |
| Bernice Underholt | Kenyon Bishop |
| Tilly | May Vokes |

First produced Friday, Sept. 4th, 1896, at Elizabeth, N. J. Opened at Bijou Theater, New York, Tuesday, Oct. 6th, 1896.

## CAST OF CHARACTER

Augustus Keene Shaver, "my friend from India"
Erastus Underholt, a retired porkpacker
Charlie Uhderholt, his son
Tom Valentine, Charley's friend
Rev. James Tweedle, a missionary
Jennings, a servant
Bill Finnerty (A policeman)
Marian Hayste, Charlie's affianced
Mrs. Arabella Beekman-Streete, a widow
Bernice Underholt, Gertie Underholt, } daughters of Erastus
Tilly, a maid

Place: New York. Time: Present.



In memoriam
Jessica Peixotto
ANTOCIAD
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## PROPERTIES

### ACT I

Demijohn
Dust pan and brush
Music on piano
Newspaper
Small statue
Yellow bowl
Cracked ice
Towel
Tap bell
Book
Book—"Light of Asia"
Loud check suit
Big coat, trousers and hat
Photo of Charlie
Coins
Check-book
Checks
Bills
Letter
Footstool
Glass crash
Bottle Apollinaris
Glasses
Tray
Hat, cane, light overcoat

Handbills. (One reads: "Thompson's Seafoam shaving soap," another: "The conclave, convex wire-edged, laminated razor," another: "The safety-razor must go—Grand Rally meeting to be addressed by our fellow-artists, the talented orator Augustus Keene Shaver.")

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## PROPERTIES

ACT II

Broken mirror glass
Large glass in frame for screen
Large dress box
2 dresses and hats alike
Fan
Dress-suit case
Hat box
6 yellow gowns
6 books, "Light of Asia"
6 newspapers—alike
Yellow scarf for screen
Newspaper for Erastus
Newspaper for Tweedle
Sofa pillows
List of names

## PROPERTIES

ACT III

Silver tray
Bottle of whiskey
Glasses
Syphon of Seltzer
Champagne bottle
Glasses
High-ball
Large glass with ice in it
Note for Charlie
Tap bell on table
Pen, ink and check-book on table
2 photos for Mrs. B. S.
Piano, piano-lamp, chandelier
1 *Big* cigar
Invitations, about 50

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# MY FRIEND FROM INDIA

## ACT I

SCENE:—*Library in Residence of* ERASTUS UNDERHOLT. *Madison Ave., New York City.*

*Set in dark colors. Massive library furniture. Pen, ink, paper, books and tap bell on table* R. *Bell cord on flat* R. *Stand or wire holder for large dictionary. Newspapers on large round ottoman* C. *Photo in frame on chiffonier* L. *of piano* R. *Small-sofa* L. C., *chairs, etc.*

DISCOVERED:—TILLY, *posing before mirror in screen. She dances about stage and when at screen again, kicks high. Has feather-duster in her hand.*

TILLY. Der boss told me I put my foot through dot screen if I don't look out—but I fool him. (*kicks*) (BELL *is heard off* R.) Dot bells rings all der time—(*down* R.) But nobody ever comes by der house who is der kind Mr. Underholt wants—(*runs up to* C. *and pokes duster in* JENNINGS' *face*)

(*Enter* JENNINGS, *followed by* MARIAN C. *door from* L.)

JENNINGS. (*recovering*) Did Miss Gertrude return from her bicycle ride?

TILLY. Yah—she was upstairs mit her skirt dancing professor—dancing on one foot already——



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(*Imitates, and after striking attitude, loses her balance and falls in* JENNINGS' *arms.*)

MARIAN. (*comes down* L. *of ottoman*—L. C.) Don't let me interrupt her—I'll wait till she has finished.

JENNINGS. (R. C.) Perhaps Miss Bernice——

TILLY. (R.) She is taking her Delsarte lessons.

(*Imitates and walks into chair* R. *at of table.*)

JENNINGS. I'm sorry, Miss——

MARIAN. Not at all—I'll wait until they are disengaged—(JENNINGS *bows and Exits door* C. *to* L. TILLY *remains dusting. Aside*) And perhaps get a chance to see Charlie. (*aloud*) Is Mr. Underholt in?

TILLY. Yah—he is downstairs in der cellar mit der gas man—he said dot his gas bills is too large every day.

MARIAN. No, I mean his son.

TILLY. Oh, you mean Mr. Charlie? He is in his room dere—(*coming* C. *Points* L.) I think dot he was drunk again last night.

MARIAN. Drunk?

TILLY. Yah—he gets drunk every Tuesday regular, and den sometimes he won't get up till to-morrow—especially, if he breaks one of dem windows.

MARIAN. Windows? What do you mean?

TILLY. Every time dot he gets filled up mit kimmel, he breaks one of dem big windows what dey have by der stores in front, and den der boss sends the bill by his father, and he has to pay for dem all the times. (*resumes dusting*)

MARIAN. (*near mantel* L., *aside*) That accounts for his not writing to me since our engagement at

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Richfield Springs. (*sees photo on mantel* L.) His photograph—just like him—he does look worried. Poor, dear fellow——

TILLY. Oxcuse me! (*about to exit* R. U. E.)

MARIAN. (*to* TILLY) How long do the Delsarte lessons generally last?

TILLY. (*coming* C. *back of them*) Not very long sometimes—dem girls don't like dem at all—only dey must take dem, so dot if dey ever get in society, dey would be accomplished more highly den dey are now yet. (*confidentially*) But dey don't get into society, und Mr. Underholt he's disgusted already, yet.

MARIAN. (*aside*) This girl talks——

TILLY. Yah—und he says dot if dey don't get into society pooty quick, he sells out everything und goes back by Kansas City.

MARIAN. (*aside*) She's positively entertaining.

TILLY. Miss Bernice has got a fellow what don't get no society—und Mr. Charlie has got a girl what don't get none either, so I heard der old man tell dem dey must give dem up—dot it was society or bust. (*going* R.) Now I'll see if dey are finished mit dose Delsartes yet. (*starts* R. U. E. *a la Delsarte, stumbles and exits* R. U. E. *up steps*)

MARIAN. Society! That accounts for it—what an old tyrant he must be! (*at photo*) An idea—as Hamlet says: "Assume a virtue, if you have it not." Charlie, I'll have society—you shall see that a woman's heart is an equal match for a domineering old father's foolishness. Farewell, honesty and love—welcome, sham and Society! (*walks about with lorgnette, extravagantly stylish, gets to* R. *of stage*)

(*Enter* GERTIE R. U. E. *from steps.*)

GERTIE. (*comes down on her* L., *takes both her*

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*hands*) Hello, Marian—what an old bore that dancing master is—the only redeeming feature about the whole business is the high kick. (*crosses* C. *Kicks*)

MARIAN. I can beat— (*starts to kick—and recovers*)

MARIAN. (L. C.—*Aside*) I nearly forgot my society. (*aloud*) I'm so glad I have at last found time to call——

GERTIE. Found time! If I'd known where you lived, I'd have made time. It's a whole month since we left you at the Springs—Come, sit down— (*both sit on ottoman*) Now, tell me all about yourself.

MARIAN. (R. *of* GERTIE) There's really nothing to tell—it's the same old story—I'm at home Thursdays and have so many calls that it takes all the rest of the week to repay them— (*aside*) If I hold this arm still much longer, I'll break it.

GERTIE. Well, I shall certainly call on you next Thursday.

MARIAN. No—don't come Thursday—there is such a crush—I'll stay in between half-past one and a quarter to two on Friday; just especially to see you—come then, and we can have a nice long chat!

GERTIE. Long? Fifteen minutes! Oh, I forgot —this is New York—in Kansas City, we used to go and spend a week—Bernice likes New York, but society or no society, give me Kansas City, hogs and all.

MARIAN. By the way—how's Miss Underholt?

GERTIE. Miss? Oh—Bernice—she's at the Academy taking her riding lesson— (*imitates*) Sits like this—but in Kansas City we used to ride Old Hickory without a saddle—and when he got frisky —we used to lean forward and hug him. (*rises, imitates*) It wasn't so stylish, but it was a darn sight more fun! (MARIAN *rises*)

MARIAN. (*aside*) If she don't stop telling the

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truth, I'll forget all about my society! (*crosses* L. C.)

GERTIE. (C.) You used to be a "girl" at the Springs—just like I was——

MARIAN. Vacation, my dear—a society woman needs the rest just as much as a business man—but the summer's over, and we'll all be back in the social swim again.

GERTIE. Swim? It'll drown me, I know! Pop's nothing but a big boy, and I don't want to be anything but a girl—like mother was.

MARIAN. You'll see it in a different light when you get older.

GERTIE. Perhaps I will—but I don't want to. (*starting up* R.) Come in the reception room, and I'll show you some pictures of our old home in Kansas City—before mother died.

(*Exit* GERTIE *and* MARIAN R. U. E. *below stairs.*)

(*Enter* BERNICE *in riding habit and* ERASTUS L. C. *door from* L. TILLY *enters from stairs* R. U. E., *meets* ERASTUS, *who is reading newspaper.*)

ERASTUS. (*to* TILLY) Will you get out of my way? (TILLY *runs off* C. *to* L.)

BERNICE. (*crosses down* R., *removing her hat*) I'm thoroughly put out.

ERASTUS. (*coming down* C.) Why, you should be put out before you have succeeded in getting in, is more than I can understand.

BERNICE. This is no joking matter, papa——

ERASTUS. Pretty expensive joke it's been to me— (*sits on ottoman, reading*)

BERNICE. These society people are very friendly when one meets them outside—but just as we think we are firmly established in their esteem, that is just the time— (*sits impatiently* L. *of table* R.)

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ERASTUS. We get left—say, it, my dear—"Left" is the word.

BERNICE. I've cultivated Bella Van Puyster for months—we have been companions at the Riding Academy daily—I had begun to think she really liked me—she certainly professed to—when now she gives a reception and I am ignored—snubbed.

ERASTUS. Snored snubbed—ignubbed—I mean ignored—snubbed—I rode down on the elevated with old Van Puyster only yesterday—he was very friendly—laughed, joked and chatted all the way—but never a word about this "blow-out" to-night— (*rises and crosses* L.)

BERNICE. (*rises—aside*) "Blow-out"!—It's all his fault, anyhow—I'm almost ashamed of him myself. (*goes up* R. C.)

ERASTUS. As a business proposition, it is about the worst I ever struck. Here we've spent years, and there's no telling how many thousand dollars and we're no nearer society than we was when we started in——

BERNICE. (*coming down and sitting same as before. Sitting* R.) I confess—I'm getting discouraged.

ERASTUS. And I'm getting disgusted—if we don't make some headway pooty soon, I'll sell out the whole darn shebang and move the tribe back to Kansas City. (*sits* C. *on ottoman*)

(*Enter* GERTIE R. U. E. *from below stairs.*)

GERTIE. What's the matter, Pop? (*down back of* ERASTUS, *arms around his neck.*)

BERNICE. Don't say "Pop!"

GERTIE. What's the matter, pa-pa, dear?

(*Enter* MARIAN R. U. E. *from below stairs. She remains up and listens.*)

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ERASTUS. Stop it—stop it——

BERNICE. (*seated*) The Van Puysters give a reception to-night, and we are not invited—that's all.

GERTIE. Pooh—I'm going——

ERASTUS *and* BERNICE. What?

GERTIE. To stay at home.

BERNICE *and* ERASTUS. Oh!

GERTIE. (*coming* L. C.) I've got a scheme—Pop's rich—he's subscribed to all the charities and all that —why can't we get up a society all to ourselves?

BERNICE. What are you talking about?

GERTIE. Society, of course! It will be very select —we will call it "The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Social Aspirants." Won't that be nice? It would do ever so much good. (*crosses to* L. *of* BERNICE)

(*Enter* TILLY C. *from* L. *and takes footstool from under* ERASTUS' *foot and exits to* L.)

ERASTUS. (*chases her off* L. *and comes down* R.) Put me down for a million! Stop her—stop her——

MARIAN. (*coming down*) Pardon my intrusion. (*shakes hands high with* BERNICE *and* ERASTUS) You will forgive me, I know, but I do so want to be your friend. I learned to love and esteem you all at the Springs. Perhaps I can be of service to you—I know everyone in the social world worth knowing— (*tearing letter*) There is proof of my sincerity—my invitation to the Van Puyster's reception—I was an unwilling listener to your conversation just now, and nothing could induce me to go now—an affront to a dear friend is always an affront to me. I will reserve my new gown for your debut, and will never wear it else. Do you accept? (*offers hand*)

GERTIE. (*crosses to* BERNICE, *then crosses to*

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MARIAN, *throws arms around her neck and kisses her*) Oh, you dear, good girl! How sweet of you! (*crosses to* ERASTUS, C.)

BERNICE. Miss Hayste, I'm sure we are deeply sincere in our appreciation of your kindness. (*hand-shaking business and* GIRLS *retire up* R., *joined by* GERTIE *who remains on their* L.)

ERASTUS. (*in front of sofa—aside*) And that's the girl I told Charlie he couldn't marry—Egad, I didn't know she was a Nabob or a Nabobess—She may help us in this society business. (*aloud*) Say, there—you, Miss Hayste—I think if we could get together, I might make a deal with you. (*starts up* R.)

BERNICE. (*interrupting*) We'll retire to the drawing-room—our conversation will not interest you. (*to* MARIAN) Don't mind papa—he is——

(*Exit* MARIAN *and* BERNICE R. U. E. GERTIE *watches* ERASTUS, *who sits on ottoman, hurt at the slight.*)

MARIAN. (*as they exit*) Oh, I should like to talk to Mr. Underholt——

GERTIE. (*comes down behind him*) Dear old Pop!

ERASTUS. That's right—Pop—plain Pop—P-O-P. I don't know what's the matter with Bernice lately—cut me out of my pipe, and now she wants me to smoke those paper things—This family is going to get into society as a whole—but you and I, sweetheart, will sneak out of it once in a while and sit on the earth—like we did in Kansas City.—There, run along now and join in the conversation that "don't interest me." (*throws down paper*) I've read that damned paper three times already.

GERTIE. If it don't interest you, Pop, it doesn't interest me.

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ERASTUS. But it does interest me—only Bernice don't think so. She will see some day. (*crosses* R.) Come over to the piano and sing something to me. (*goes to upper end of piano* R.)

GERTIE. (*crosses* R. *back of ottoman*) What shall I sing?

ERASTUS. Not from "choppin" or "Beethoven" —play something I know.

GERTIE. (*at piano* R.) Do you remember this? (*she plays strain of "When You and I Were Young, Maggie"*)

(*Enter* TILLY C. *door from* R. *Picks up paper from ottoman.*)

ERASTUS. That's what I call music—good music —Kansas City music. (TILLY *offers paper*) ERASTUS *grabs paper, backs* TILLY *to* C.) I've read that until I'm black in the face. Will you be kind enough to mind your own business? You are exclusively minister of German affairs, and nothing else.

TILLY. I think dot I go back by Kansas City. (*coming to* R. *of ottoman—puts paper on it*)

ERASTUS. (*following her. Gradually works up into a fury*) And don't mention Kansas City again. I've been trying to forget it for the past three years; but you remember it breakfast, dinner and supper; I believe you wake up in the middle of the night and yap about Kansas City.

GERTIE. (*rises, goes to him. Trying to pacify him*) Pop's getting cross—yes, you are.

ERASTUS. No, I'm not—but I've spent too much money to look on this thing as a joke.

TILLY. When I said Kansas City——

ERASTUS. Don't say— (*turns and stumbles over her*) Get out— (*sees* JENNINGS)

(*Enter* JENNINGS C. *from* L.)

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There's another one of them. The house is full of them!

(TILLY *runs up and off* C. *to* L., *meeting* JENNINGS *and turning him around as he enters* C. *doors from* L.) (R. C. *to* JENNINGS.)

Is my son up?

JENNINGS. I think not, sir. (*crosses to door* L.)

ERASTUS. (*picks up statue from piano,* R.) Well, I'll wake him.

GERTIE. (R.) Look out, Pop.

ERASTUS. What's the matter?

GERTIE. (*holding his arm*) You may break the statue. (*takes it from him, replaces it on piano*)

ERASTUS. You've got more brains than the whole family put together. Jennings, you wake him—I'll go down in the cellar and see if the gas meter is still gaining time.

(*Exits* R. U. E. JENNINGS *starts and knocks at door* L. 1.)

GERTIE. (*coming* C. *above ottoman*) Jennings — (*he crosses to her* C.) Don't wake him— Perhaps he came in late last night—and you know how it is yourself. (*at* C. *door, then exits* C. *to door* R.)

JENNINGS. Perhaps he came in late! I was up till two o'clock, and he hadn't arrived then——

(*Enter* CHARLIE *door* L. 1.)

Good morning, sir.

CHARLIE. Is it? I'm glad of that—it was a pretty bad night. Jennings, fetch me a bottle of Apollinaris and a bowl of cracked ice.

(*Exit* JENNINGS C. *to* L.)

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Where did I get him? How did he come here in my bed? Kicked me out of bed during his restless slumbers—Don't think I ever saw him before—let me think—the last I remember was going into the Hoffman House about eleven, and then—it's no use trying to use this to think with now——

(*Enter* JENNINGS C. *from* L. *with tray, bottle and bowl of ice, comes* C.)

Set them on the table. (JENNINGS *starts* L.) Hold on—you won't give me away to the Governor, will you?

JENNINGS. Certainly not, sir. (*puts tray on table* R. *Gives* CHARLIE *a drink*)

CHARLIE. (*Gives him a coin*) There's a man in there. (*bus.*)

JENNINGS. A man, sir——

CHARLIE. And the worst of it is I don't know who he is, or how the deuce he came here——

JENNINGS. This sounds like a case for the police.

CHARLIE. Not so bad as that. Take a look and see if you recognize him.

JENNINGS. (*crosses* L., *peeps in door* L. 1 E.) Never cast eyes on him before, sir.

CHARLIE. Fetch his clothes out here—we may find something by which to identify him.

(*Exit* JENNINGS *door* L. 1. *Re-enters with clothes.* CHARLIE *crosses* R., *takes another drink while* JENNINGS *gets clothes*)

JENNINGS. (*searching pants*) No harm in going through them, is there?

CHARLIE. (L. C. *Searching in vest*) No; we must find out who he is—it would be very awkward if he should awake and I didn't know the name of my guest.

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JENNINGS. Ah—you've been at it again, sir—and after the awful row you had with your father the last time.

CHARLIE. That's just it—things have reached a crisis. If the Governor gets on to last night's racket, he will fire me out bodily. This fellow, whoever he is, has got to help me lie out of it. (*finds paper*) What's this? (*reads*) Thompson's Sea Foam Shaving Soap. (*same business*) The Concave, Convex, Wire-edge, Laminated Razor— (*same business*) The Safety Razor must go—Grand rally —meeting to be addressed by our fellow-artist, the talented orator, Augustus Keene Shaver—nothing to show who he is yet.

JENNINGS. Here's something heavy in his coat pocket.

CHARLIE. Let's see— (*takes book*) "The Light of Asia." It's well thumbed—he's evidently read it many times, from its appearance. (*suddenly*) One of those theosophical cranks——

JENNINGS. What's the light of Asia?

CHARLIE. Don't you know what the "Light of Asia" is?

JENNINGS. Kerosene, I suppose—they're hardly up to gas yet.

CHARLIE. (*suddenly*) By Jingo, an idea! If this fellow is up in theosophy, I'll— (*to* JENNINGS) Here, take all these clothes and lock them up somewhere.

JENNINGS. Certainly, but— (*starts up* L.)

CHARLIE. I'll bear the responsibility.

JENNINGS. (*going* C.) This is Highway Robbery—nothing else. (*exit.*)

CHARLIE. (*glibly*) The very thing—this is a profound pundit who has just arrived from India—where he has been studying the mysticism of the East. He is the only man of modern times who has succeeded in attaining Nirvana—I don't know what

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Nirvana is, but I've no doubt he does. It'll all be one to the Governor anyway. I'll just remind him that it's dawn. (*throws book, gets it from sofa—CRASH*) Through the window—another glass!

SHAVER. (*in room*) Next!

CHARLIE. I wonder where I got him? He's coming out—what is he going to wear?

(*Enter* SHAVER *door* L. 1 E., *with bowl and yellow bedspread.*)

Oh! He has put on my silk bedspread. I wonder where I did get him? (*gets* L. C.)

SHAVER. (L. *near door*) Can you tell me in what part of the city I undressed last night? Or this morning, or whenever it was—I don't seem to be able to find my trousseau somehow.

CHARLIE. Say, where did I run upon you last night?

SHAVER. Hoffman House—don't you remember?

CHARLIE. Don't remember anything—How did I happen to bring you home with me?

SHAVER. Out of gratitude, I suppose, for my having brought you home with me.

CHARLIE. How was it—tell me about it——

SHAVER. You know I'm an artist— (*aside*) Tonsorial— (*aloud*) and a gentleman, prominent in political circles, was giving me a sitting in his rooms upstairs— (*bus.*)

CHARLIE. At eleven o'clock at night?

SHAVER. Just a few finishing touches about the head and face—Next!

CHARLIE. Oh! I see——

SHAVER. And as I was passing out through the café, I was laid hold of by that noisy mob of yours——

CHARLIE. "Mob's" the word for it. (*sits* C.)

SHAVER. And forced to take a drink whether I

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wanted it or not. After which I was compelled to sing a song.

CHARLIE. Did I sing?

SHAVER. That isn't what they called it——

CHARLIE. What queer breaks a fellow will make sometimes! (*rises, walks over* R.)

SHAVER. Speaking of breaks reminds me, when we were coming home this morning, you kicked in a plate-glass window.

CHARLIE. Another! You don't mean it! Was it French or German plate?

SHAVER. From the looks of it I should say it was broken Dutch.

CHARLIE. I'm in a devil of a hole.

SHAVER. Well, you may think I'm enjoying quite a spread.

(*Enter* JENNINGS L. U. E.)

JENNINGS. Look out!

(*Exit* JENNINGS C. D. L.)

(*Enter* ERASTUS R. U. E.)

(*Exit* CHARLIE *and* SHAVER L. 1.)

ERASTUS. Is that boy up yet? Well, I'll wake him up. (*goes to* L. 1 *and knocks*) Charles! Charles!

CHARLIE. (*outside*) Yes, father.

ERASTUS. "Yes, father!" That don't go with me—we'll see whether you will come home any old time——

(*Exit* ERASTUS C. D. R. *Enter* CHARLIE *and* SHAVER.)

CHARLIE. (*runs up* C., *looks off after* ERASTUS.

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*Then comes down* L. *of ottoman*) You've got to help me square it with the Governor—I'd do as much for you, if you were in trouble.

SHAVER. (L. *in front of sofa*) If I *were* in trouble—what do you call this—having fun?

CHARLIE. You'll only have to lie a little for a few moments.

SHAVER. I despise a liar.

CHARLIE. (*gives bill*) There's a tenner.

SHAVER. (*takes it*) But any one who couldn't lie comfortable under a silk bedspread ought to be forced to sleep on a bench in the park.

CHARLIE. I found a copy of "The Light of Asia" in your pocket.

SHAVER. Don't lose it.

CHARLIE. Do you know anything of theosophy?

SHAVER. I have devoted all my spare time to its study—Oh!—Gautama, Gautama, most noble recluse— (*crosses to* R.)

CHARLIE. (*goes* C.) That's it—you shall be a recluse.

SHAVER. (R. C.) Do I look it?

CHARLIE. You not only look it, but you are. You have just returned from India, where you have been studying the mysticism of the East—you are my friend—my friend from India.

SHAVER. But I'm nothing of the kind.

CHARLIE. (R. C.) Of course not—but you can say you are—you have learned all there is to know of Theosophy, and have attained that most exalted state, Nirvana.

SHAVER. (*rises, returns money*) I want my clothes.

CHARLIE. Now, don't queer this thing—the old man don't know the first thing about theosophy—I'll prepare him while you wait in my room there. The whole thing won't take five minutes, then I'll get you your clothes and you can go.

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SHAVER. Is your father a mild-tempered man?

CHARLIE. A perfect dove.

SHAVER. Slippers or boots?

CHARLIE. Slippers——

SHAVER. Give me the twenty and I'll chance it.

CHARLIE. Twenty? Ten was the amount.

SHAVER. But this is expert testimony.

CHARLIE. Well, there's a check of father's—that's the best I can do just now. You're to say you arrived on the New York—that you are on your way to deliver a course of lectures in Philadelphia, Boston, or any old place—that you met me last night at the Young Men's Christian Association—— (SHAVER *hands back check, sits* L. *of table*) No, that won't do—Fifth Avenue Hotel—that will go better with the old man—and that we remained in your room, discussing the beauties of the Buddhist Philosophy—if we stick to this story, it will cover the drunk, the broken glass, and all will be smooth sailing— (C.)

SHAVER. But, what's my name all this time?

CHARLIE. Let's see the morning paper—passenger list of the New York— (*takes paper from ottoman*) Here it is—"Oliver Bragg, Philadelphia."

SHAVER. (R. C.) That won't do—too harsh.

CHARLIE. (C.) "Gottlieb Dinkelspiel."

SHAVER. "Dinkelspiel"—that must be a misprint.

CHARLIE. Here's one—"James Tweedle, Boston."

SHAVER. Now you're getting warm—I like the idea of Boston, but I'm not particularly stuck on Tweedle.

CHARLIE. It'll do for five or ten minutes, anyway.

SHAVER. But what am I to wear?

CHARLIE. Wear? You belong to the Order of the Yellow Robe, don't you?

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SHAVER. Do I?

CHARLIE. The right arm bared to the shoulder——

SHAVER. (*crossing* L.) And the yellow bowl, the Buddhist Mendicant Priests carry around from door to door, begging rice.

CHARLIE. Great!

SHAVER. And do you think I'm such a fool as to appear before your father in a rig like that? He'd kick me out of the house—I don't want any part of it—I want my clothes——

CHARLIE. (R. C.) But you must help me out——

SHAVER. (*near door* L. 1) But I say I won't—I want my clothes—you've no right to keep them—it's robbery, and I can have you arrested for forcible detention.

CHARLIE. I'm not detaining you—why don't you go? (*goes up*)

SHAVER. Why don't I go? During my previous existence in the first century in Rome, I could have promenaded—but styles have changed since then.

CHARLIE. That's your affair.

(JENNINGS *enters* C. *from* L.)

JENNINGS. Beg pardon, sir—but the policeman on our beat wants to see you—particular, sir.

CHARLIE. Policeman—to see me? (*to* SHAVER) *We're* gone—it's the plate glass.

SHAVER. *We?* Speak for yourself—it was none of my plate glass.

CHARLIE. (*crosses to* L.) If you leave me—I'll lay the whole thing on you—I warn you, I'm desperate.

SHAVER. If you do, I'll make a clean breast of everything.

CHARLIE. What had we better do?

SHAVER. See him and square it before he sees

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your father. (*aside*) Here's my chance to escape —the policeman will force him to give up my clothes.

CHARLIE. Show him up, Jennings.

(*Exit* JENNINGS C. *to* L.)

SHAVER. You're not going to drag me into this thing, too?

CHARLIE. You're an accessory both before and after the fact—Mr.—say, what is your name?

SHAVER. Shaver—Augustus Keene Shaver—a victim of circumstances——

(*Enter* POLICEMAN, *preceded by* JENNINGS, C. *from* L. *Exit* JENNINGS, C. *to* L.)

CHARLIE. (*up* L. C.) Hello, Billy. How are you making it? Glad to see you—How's everything —all right?

FINNERTY. (*up* C.—*has hat and cane*) First rate—far as I know. I picked these up in front of your home this morning, and I'm looking for an owner for them—belong to you?

CHARLIE. (*takes them*) By Jove! that's my stick—I wouldn't take a ten-dollar note for that. (*offers bill*)

FINNERTY. Couldn't think of it— (*takes bill*) I'm only too glad to do a favor for you.

CHARLIE. Thanks, old fellow.

(*Business, indicating that* SHAVER *threw clothes, etc., etc.*)

FINNERTY. Crazy? Violent?

CHARLIE. Yes, at times. Throws everything he can gets his hands on out of the window—that's how my things came out there.

FINNERTY. I see—a relative?

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CHARLES. Brother.

FINNERTY. Too bad—too bad.

CHARLIE. He's tried to escape several times—that's the reason we're forced to keep him dressed like that—if he should get out any time, you soak him, and we'll make it right with you.

SHAVER. (*aside*) I wonder what he's saying to that policeman?

FINNERTY. Why, of course—I know my business. (*starts up* C.)

SHAVER. Look here, officer, I'm detained against my will—they've taken my clothes and I want to prefer a charge of burglary against that man there——

FINNERTY. Don't get excited—you'll be all right.

SHAVER. (*up* L. C.) But it's *your* duty as an officer to take me away from here——

FINNERTY. That's all right—you keep perfectly cool.

SHAVER. But I tell you it's not all right; I demand my rights as an American citizen to be arrested—what are the police for, if not to arrest people, I'd like to know! Can't sleep all the time.

FINNERTY. You be perfectly easy in your mind—I'll attend to you. (*to* CHARLIE) Terrible case, ain't it?

SHAVER. I beg of you to take me away from here—my life may be in danger. You can't tell—I don't know what may happen—I——

FINNERTY. (*savagely*) That'll do. That's enough out of you—sit right there, and shut your trap. (SHAVER *flops on sofa* L. *To* CHARLIE *at mantel*) That's the only way to do with them kind of guys. You got to talk rough to them sometimes.

(*Exit* C. *door to* L.)

SHAVER. No use—he thinks I'm crazy.

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CHARLIE. Don't you think you'd better stay?

SHAVER. (*rises*) But suppose I should be asked a question I couldn't answer?

CHARLIE. Don't answer—fall into a state of deep abstraction—you know—I'll pave the way for all that——

SHAVER. The streets of Sheol are full of pavers like you. (*goes near door* L. 1 E.)

CHARLIE. Get in there now—the Governor generally gets down about this time to read his paper. I'll call you when I want you.

SHAVER. (*at door* L. 1 E.) There's to be a short interview with him and no one else.

CHARLIE. Not another soul——

SHAVER. And then I'm to go?

CHARLIE. Yes, and blooming glad to be rid of you!

SHAVER. Not half so glad as I'll be to get out of here.

CHARLIE. If the old man gets on to the game, I'll be kicked out.

SHAVER. I can't win but twenty dollars, and I stand to lose the combination to my anatomy.

ERASTUS. (*outside*) Where is he? Where is he?

SHAVER. Excuse me. (*Exits door* L. 1)

(*Enter* ERASTUS C. *from* R., *with newspaper.*)

ERASTUS. Oh, there you are, eh?

CHARLIE. (L. C. *in front of sofa*) Good morning, father.

ERASTUS. Good morning. Don't give me that baby stare. Look at this sensational article—headed "Jack the Window Smasher!" You'll tell me you didn't do it, won't you? Six hundred dollars in three months for plate glass windows! There's no mistake about it—here it is in black and white.

CHARLIE. But there's no name mentioned——

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ERASTUS. Not at all necessary; when you were not in your room at eleven o'clock, I knew how it would be—that was the first thing I looked for in the paper this morning—I warned you against joining that football team at college, but it was no use.

CHARLIE. I'm sorry, Dad.

ERASTUS. You ain't sorry, neither. You'd act better if you was. Go and pack your traps and get out of here. I'll have a check for you when you're ready—the last you'll ever get from me. (*crosses to* R.)

CHARLIE. Let me explain——

ERASTUS. (*at writing desk*) No— (*preparing to write check*)

CHARLIE. (*crosses to* R. C.) I have been up all night with a most learned Pundit from the East, imbibing——

ERASTUS. Exactly—imbibing.

CHARLIE. Imbibing the grandest philosophy the world has even known. He arrived only yesterday on the New York.

ERASTUS. (*turns on chair*) Who is he—what is he?

SHAVER. (*aside, listening at door* L.) He is a damn fool.

CHARLIE. (R. C.) He is a Theosophist.

ERASTUS. A what-o-phist? I never heard of him.

CHARLIE. He has got a Nirvana.

SHAVER. (*aside*) But no pants.

ERASTUS. Has he—is he fast?

CHARLIE. Fast? A man who has Nirvana—fast——

ERASTUS. Who said anything about a man? I'm talking about the horse.

SHAVER. Now I'm a horse.

CHARLIE. It's not a horse, father.

SHAVER. Thank goodness, I'm not a horse.

ERASTUS. What is it—a steam yacht?

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SHAVER. Now I'm a steam yacht.

CHARLIE. You don't quite grasp me, dad.

ERASTUS. (*rising*) No, but I will in a minute.

SHAVER. (*aside*) I wish he'd kill him.

CHARLIE. I'll fetch him out—he can explain better than I— (*crosses* L.)

ERASTUS. I should hope so unless he's a drivelling idiot—Trot him out. (*crosses* C.)

CHARLIE. All right, Dad. (*goes* L., *then stops. Turns*) But be gentle with him—don't deal harshly with him——

ERASTUS. Well, bring him out and I'll look him over— (CHARLES *goes to door* L. *and enters with* SHAVER.) A Pundit—looks like an omelette.

CHARLIE. Father, let me introduce Mr. James Tweedle, my friend from India.

ERASTUS. (R. C.) So, you're from India. (*business*)

CHARLIE. (C.) I've been trying to explain what Nirvana is——

SHAVER. (*crosses* C.) Most Blessed State—Nirvana is Eternal Peace—Can you lend me a pair of pants?

ERASTUS. (*down* R.) He's one of those things—a freak—that society is craving for—it's a brand new one, and it's dropped right into my hand. I'll nail him and work it for all it's worth. Charlie—Charlie, I want to see this—this—alone.

CHARLIE. Alone! You'd better let me stay, dad. I can explain.

ERASTUS. You can't explain that out of me—(*business*) Mr. Sweedle, I'm coming back in a minute—I'm going to talk to you on business.

(*Exit* ERASTUS R. U. C.)

SHAVER. (*aside*) He'll get me alone and wipe the floor with me. (*picks up hat and coat and starts*

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*to go off* R. TILLY *enters, comes* C. *and takes them away from him.* ERASTUS *re-enters. Exit* TILLY C. *to* R. *Exit* CHARLIE)

ERASTUS. Now, Mr. Beattles, I'm trying to get into society.

SHAVER. (*aside*) And I'm trying to get out.

(*Enter* TILLY C. *from* R.)

TILLY. Oh, Mr. Underholt——

ERASTUS. Will you get out of here——? (*chases her out* C. *to* L. *and follows*)

(*Re-enter* CHARLIE, L. 1 E., *attempts to speak to* SHAVER. *They meet* C. *as* ERASTUS *enters at back* C. CHARLIE *dives for door and exits.* SHAVER *advances.*)

ERASTUS. Now, you're a freak.

SHAVER. No——

ERASTUS. I mean a fad—and I think with your Nirvana racket and my business ability, you can be of service to me, and make a nice thing out of it for yourself. I've tried everything else and now I want to try a fad—are you engaged?

SHAVER. I don't think I understand.

ERASTUS. It's simple enough.

SHAVER. (*aside*) Everything is easy and simple around here.

ERASTUS. You are to remain here as my guest—you are to see no one but the members of my family until I give you permission—is that satisfactory?

SHAVER. Quite so, sir.

ERASTUS. (*crosses his legs and dangles his feet*) All you need to give you notoriety, fame and fortune, is booming and I'm just the man to boom you.

SHAVER. (*looking at* ERASTUS' *boot. Aside*) Charlie lied to me about those slippers.

ERASTUS. I'll write you a check for five hundred

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as a retaining fee. (*crosses to desk and writes*) And if we succeed in accomplishing our object, I'll give you ten thousand as freely as I would a dollar—is it a bargain?

SHAVER. (*aside*) Talk about a victim of circumstances—what's the use? (*aloud*) I'm very sorry, sir, but I'm pledged to deliver a course of lectures in Boston, and——

ERASTUS. Oh, no, Giggles, I'll make it a thousand in advance—I must have you—let 'em wait in Boston—I'll tell 'em——

SHAVER. Just tell them that you saw me——

ERASTUS. I saw you—all society shall see you—and they'll have to see you through me—that's the trick, eh, Giggles. I'd rather have you than ten train loads of Kansas City hogs.

SHAVER. Don't mention it. (ERASTUS *offers check*) Well, since you insist. (*takes check. Goes* L.)

ERASTUS. Good—now— (*up* R.) I'm going to launch you.

SHAVER. (*aside*) I knew he'd do something—I wonder if launching is painful.

ERASTUS. Mustn't lose you Tweedle. You are my last card. (*Exit* R. 3 E.—*Going*) Girls, girls, I've bought you something.

SHAVER. I must get out of here or I'll be exposed as an impostor—perhaps arrested and put in prison.

(*Enter* CHARLIE, *door* L. 1.)

CHARLIE. Well?

SHAVER. (L. C.) A nice mess you've got me into with your dissolute habits.

CHARLIE. What did he do—what did he say?

SHAVER. Say? Why, he's discovered a new fad in me that society is simply yearning for—and he wants to use me to promote his social aspirations.

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CHARLIE. Great Heavens! But you declined—you told him you were engaged to lecture somewhere——

SHAVER. But it wouldn't go— (*shows check*) He gave me this as a retainer.

CHARLIE. A thousand dollars! This will never do. You can't carry this thing through—you've got to get out of here.

SHAVER. That's your business—you got me in; now get me out. (*crosses* R.)

CHARLIE. I will—I'll get your clothes at once and help you to get out before it is too late. (*Exit* L. U. E.)

SHAVER. (*following him up* L., *calling off*) If you can't get a whole suit, get a hat, and I'll take chances.

(*Enter* GERTIE, BERNICE *and* MARIAN R. U. E.)

GERTIE. Where is he? There he is.

BERNICE. You are the Light of Asia?

SHAVER. Yes, but I'm burning very low.

GERTIE. Excuse my familiarity, but Pop said he bought you——

SHAVER. And you wanted to see if he got stuck——

MARIAN. (C.) How witty! Have you been here very long?

SHAVER. It seems a hundred years—that is—well, you know, with us there is no time. (*sits* C.) But I think I'll do a little.

BERNICE. I trust you will find time to teach me the ethics of your delightful philosophy.

SHAVER. We'll start now— (*business. She sits* L. *of him. Aside*) This is getting interesting.

GERTIE. May we listen?

SHAVER. Certainly. (GERTIE *sits*) Come closer.

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GERTIE. Come, Marian——

(*Sits* R. *of* GERTIE.)

SHAVER. (*to* BERNICE) Have you got a cigar? (*Recover.*)

I thought I smelled tobacco smoke—I can't bear smoke—it would shatter my nerves.

BERNICE. I know we will get on famously. I, too, detest tobacco.

MARIAN. Why, that's silk, isn't it?

SHAVER. Yes, ma'am; mulberry silk——I raised the mulls myself in India.

(*Enter* CHARLIE L. U. E. *door, with clothes and hat.*)

CHARLIE. I can't find Jennings—but I've got some of the Governor's clothes—they'll have to—(*sees them*) Great Jehosaphat!

SHAVER. What time do you dine?

CHARLIE. (*up* L., *aside*) He's going to be a regular boarder.

GERTIE. (C.) We have luncheon at one.

(*Enter* MRS. BEEKMAN-STREETE, C. *door from* L., *comes down in front of sofa.* GIRLS R.)

MRS. B. S. Where is he? Where is he?

(GIRLS *all rise.*)

SHAVER. Don't go away.

BERNICE. Oh, Auntie—this is Mr. Tweedle—my aunt, Mrs. Beekman-Streete——

SHAVER. Is that your aunt?——Well, you couldn't help it?

MRS. B. S. I'm delighted to meet you, sir.

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SHAVER. (*bowing*) Mrs. Beekman-Streete. (*crosses to her*) Any relative of the other Streetes?

MRS. B. S. Oh, yes; we are a large family.

SHAVER. Get the rest of them—that is, we must get them all to join our society. (*they cross to others* R. MARIAN *goes up* C. *and comes down*)

CHARLIE. (*aside*) He'll have them all in jail. (*aloud*) Mr. Tweedle——

SHAVER. (*talking with girls*) Go away; you make me nervous.

CHARLIE. (*to* SHAVER) Tweedle——

SHAVER. What, you here again? (*to him*) Don't bother me, please.

CHARLIE. (*aside*) Oh, this is awful.

MARIAN. (*to* CHARLIE) Isn't he lovely?

CHARLIE. Yes—he's a peach. (*pulls* SHAVER'S *gown*) Will you get out of here?

SHAVER. (*to* CHARLIE) Have you discovered my wardrobe?

CHARLIE. They are in the room. (*points* L.)

SHAVER. Now, if you ladies will excuse me for a few moments, I'll put on my afternoon clothes. (MARIAN *crossing back to* L. *of* CHARLIE)

GERTIE. Are they silk?

SHAVER. (*crosses to* GERTIE) No, sweet, fair one—(*kisses her on forehead*) They are flannel. To you, dear maid, farewell. (*to* BERNICE. *To* MRS. B. S.) What can I say to you. I'll think and say it later. (*crosses to* L. *to* CHARLIE) I have nothing to say to you. (*to* MARIAN) Angel of Light—(*kisses her on the forehead. Exits to room* L. 1)

ALL. Isn't he lovely?

BERNICE. How interesting.

GERTIE. So picturesque.

MARIAN. And intelligent.

MRS. B. S. Where did you get him, Charlie?

CHARLIE. Get him? He got me——

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ALL. What!

CHARLIE. Got me to fetch him here——

SHAVER. (*in room*) Have you got a collar button?

CHARLIE. In the bureau drawer. I've got a temperature of 120——

(*Enter* TILLY, C. *door. She comes down.*)

TILLY. Der French and German Professors was here.

BERNICE. Show them to the study room—we'll be there directly.

(*Exit* TILLY *door* C. *to* R.)

SHAVER. (*from door*) Is this whiskey in this demijohn?

CHARLIE. Oh.

GERTIE. You'll excuse me, Marian—till luncheon?

MARIAN. (*at mantel*) Why, certainly.

BERNICE. And this afternoon we'll all listen to Mr. Tweedle.

ALL. Yes—yes.

(*Exit* GERTIE *and* BERNICE R. U. E. *below stairs.*)

MARIAN. Get rid of her—(*goes up stage* L.)

CHARLIE. Her—you mean him? Oh, yes—say, auntie, why don't you put on those little Indian ornaments uncle brought you from Calcutta? They'll please Mr. Tweedle.

MRS. B. S. You dear, good boy. You're so thoughtful! (*aside, going* R.) He didn't kiss me—probably he wants to see me alone.

(*Exits* R. 1 E.)

SHAVER. (*half out*) Have they all gone? (CHARLIE *waves him back*) Who stretched these clothes? (*sees* MARIAN *and darts back*)

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MARIAN. You seem worried——

CHARLIE. (*coming* C.—*sits in chair* R. C.) No——

MARIAN. Can't I help you? Two heads are better than one.

CHARLIE. Not the one I've got.

MARIAN. You've been drinking—I heard all about it——

CHARLIE. You'll hear more—(*crash off* L.) I told you so——

MARIAN. I've heard a great deal about you all to-day, and I've started a little scheme of my own, which, so far, is very successful—and it's all for your sake. Won't you let me help you?

CHARLIE. If you'll only marry that and henpeck him, my happiness will be complete.

MARIAN. (*rising*) Charlie! You wouldn't have me break the engagement——

CHARLIE. No, I didn't mean that——

MARIAN. Leave it to me—I've started in to set this family straight and I'll do it.

(*Exit* C. *door to* L.)

(*Enter* SHAVER *in large clothes and hat, from door* L. 1.)

SHAVER. You've made up your mind to end my existence—look at me!

CHARLIE. I can't help it—for Heaven's sake get out of here before anyone sees you——

SHAVER. I forgot my check for a thousand——

(*Exit door* L. 1 E.)

CHARLIE. What have I done to deserve this?

(*Enter* GERTIE *and* BERNICE R. U. E.)

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GERTIE. We have postponed our lessons till to-morrow. Where is Mr. Tweedle? (*comes down* R.)

CHARLIE. (*crosses* R.—*Rushes her off* R. 1) He's dressing—Marian wants to see you; she's in there.

(*Exits* GERTIE R. 1)

BERNICE. (*up* C.) Charlie—we'll have yellow gowns made for us all.

CHARLIE. Yes, do—father is in there and wants to see you about them right away.

(*Exit* BERNICE L. U. E.)

(*Enter* MARIAN C. *from* L.)

MARIAN. I must see you.

CHARLIE. Yes; go in the sitting room—I'll meet you there in two minutes. I want to see you alone.

(*Exit* MARIAN, C. *door to* L.)

(*Enter* MRS. B. S. R. U. E.)

MRS. B. S. I've got them all on—where is——?

CHARLIE. Waiting for you in there—(L. U. E.) wants to see you alone. (MRS. B. S. *exits* L. U. E.) (*Enter* SHAVER L. 1. CHARLIE *rushes him off* C. *to* L.) Thank Heaven. (SHAVER *returns and hands him the bowl*)

SHAVER. This is yours——

(*Exit* SHAVER C. *to* L.)

CHARLIE. Damn that thing! (*throws it. Crash*) Another glass!

(*Enter* ALL *from exit entrances.* TILLY *from* C. *door* R. ERASTUS *from* L. 1.)

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ALL. Where is he?

CHARLIE. Vanished!

ERASTUS. With my thousand. (*to* TILLY) Get out of my way—lock every door—(*enter* FINNERTY *with* SHAVER C. *door* L.) What's that?

FINNERTY. Your idiot son!!!

CURTAIN

---

## ACT II

SCENE:—*Same as* ACT FIRST, *ottoman* L. C.—*Sofa taken off. Loud crash at rise.*

DISCOVERED:—JENNINGS *at door* L. 1 E. *on guard,* TILLY *standing by screen. Mirror in panel smashed.*

TILLY. (*up* C. *picking up bits of glass*) Der boss told me I put my foot through dot looking glass if I don't look out— and I did it.

JENNINGS. Sure, and I've told you the same thing a dozen times—but you would do that German break-down in front of it.

TILLY. Der glass was no goot, anyhow, Mrs. Beekman-Streete says that it was full of wrinkles.

JENNINGS. Mr. Underholt will take it out of your wages.

TILLY. If he does, I'll break more as I can earn in two years, and leave at once. Say, Jennings, if I told der old man dot crazy man done it—would you swear by me, eh?

JENNINGS. Sure, I'll do nothing of the kind—he's caused trouble enough now—I want no more of him. But you can tell the master anything you like —I was stone blind when it happened.

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TILLY. My mother told me in Germany, before I come by Kansas City, to keep away from der Irish. (C.) But I make an exception of you.

(*Exit with glass, door* C. *to* L.)

JENNINGS. (*chuckling*) Begory, she's a—— (*starting up* L. C.—*suddenly realizes and calls loudly*) Tell your mother I hate the Dutch.

(*Enter* CHARLIE C. *door from* R.)

CHARLIE. Where's the Governor?

JENNINGS. (*down* L.) He's gone to get yellow gowns for everyone in the house.

CHARLIE. (L.) Oh, this thing is getting near a climax, and when I go up—I'll never come down. Where is he now?

JENNINGS. (*goes to door* L. 1 R.) He's in there. (*listens*) Asleep—(SHAVER *groans off* L.) "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

CHARLIE. We must get him out of here.

JENNINGS. (*at door*) Impossible, sir, your father took away the clothes he had, and left me here on the watch. I'm not to move off this spot till he gets back. (CHARLIE *starts up stage in despair*)

(*Enter* TOM VALENTINE C. *from* L.)

CHARLIE. (R. C.) Tom Valentine! And just in the nick of time.

TOM. What? In a fix again? (*shakes hands, crosses and sits* L. *of table* R.)

CHARLIE. (R. *of Ott.*) Fix? That's no name for it. When the governor gets on to me, I'll be a thing of the past.

TOM. Well, he doesn't consider me from an angelic standpoint, and that's what brings me here

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to-day. I love Bernice, but he's some crazy notion that I'm a little shy on blue blood, and forbade me the house.

CHARLIE. Oh, yours is only a matter of life—mine is a matter of death. (*down* L. *of Ott.—comes* C.)

TOM. Oh, pshaw! Never say die. (*rises—goes* R. C.) It's not a bit club-like—look at me—your father is a ferocious chap, twice my weight—he owns this house—has a first mortgage on the lady in question—but in spite of all that, I am here ready to do battle—prepared to face him—and if need be, tell him exactly what I think—of——

ERASTUS. (*outside*) Don't let him escape.

TOM. (*gets under table* R.—CHARLIE *sits* R. *of table*) I'll tell him what I think some other time.

(*Enter* ERASTUS *with bundle of yellow gowns and newspaper, door* C. *from* L.)

ERASTUS. If he makes an attempt to escape, I'll show no quarter. (*to* JENNINGS) Is he safe?

JENNINGS. Yes, sir.

ERASTUS. Good! Watch the front door—I'll keep tabs on him here myself.

JENNINGS. Yes, sir. (*rises, and going up* C. ERASTUS *listens at door* L.)

TOM. (*under table, aside*) He must have seen me come in.

JENNINGS. (*aside*) I'll lose my place, I know it—and all through the Light of Asia!

(*Exit* C. *to* L.—CHARLIE *comes down* C.)

ERASTUS. Ah, my boy, we're fixed at last. (*shows paper to* CHARLIE) See that in every paper in the United States—it cost money, but I'm a boomer when I start in. (*opens bundle of gowns—leaves them on Ott.*)

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CHARLIE. (R. C.—*reads*) "Theosophy's Champion—arrival in New York of James Tweedle, the advanced Theosophist." (CHARLIE *hits him with newspaper*)

ERASTUS. That's right; I advanced him a thousand.

TOM. (*under table*) Get him out of here till I make my escape.

ERASTUS. And here are yellow gowns for all of us—this one with the frogs is for Tweedle—(*starts* L.)

CHARLIE. (*restraining him*) Don't wake him, Dad—you may break his thread.

ERASTUS. His what?

CHARLIE. His thread.

ERASTUS. Oh! I thought you said his head.

(CHARLIE *goes* R. *near table.*)

TOM. (ERASTUS *goes to door* L. 1 E. *listens a second then starts up* L. C. *Same bus.*) If he does, I'll have cramps.

CHARLIE. (*to* TOM) How am I going to get out of this?

TOM. (*same bus.*) You? How am I?

ERASTUS. (*at screen*) Ah—more of your work, I suppose.

CHARLIE. What, father?

ERASTUS. Why, that mirror in the screen there—

CHARLIE. Why, I had nothing to do with the——

ERASTUS. Now, don't——

(TILLY *enters* C. *from* L.)

TILLY. No, Mr. Underholt, I——

ERASTUS. Will you get out?

(*Exit* TILLY C. *to* L.)

CHARLIE. What?

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ERASTUS. (*up* C.) What? Why, this mirror panel in the screen——

CHARLIE. (R.) Why, I——

ERASTUS. (*coming down* R. C.) Now, don't lie about it. I'm not going to kick—my son, I'm proud of you—you have redeemed yourself—I forgive everything of the past—I paid for the broken window and I'll order a new mirror—at last we are going to enter the portals of Society, and all through you—I'll give you a check for a thousand to-morrow—just to show my appreciation. (*goes to Ott.*)

CHARLIE. I'd give ten to read Tweedle's obituary.

ERASTUS. Here's your gown. (*gives gown*) I'll take these to the girls—the girls! Think of the position they'll gain and the marriages they'll contract—the upper four hundred—By the way, what has become of that scoundrel, Tom Valentine?

CHARLIE. (*leaning on table* R.) Oh—he's under the tab—(TOM *pushes his leg—he falls*)

ERASTUS. If I ever catch him in this house again—well, there'll only be me left.

(*Exit* R. U. E. *below stairs.*)

CHARLIE. Why didn't you tell him what you thought?

TOM. I changed my mind. (CHARLIE *rises*—TOM *starts to rise*)

ERASTUS. (*outside*) Here's the gowns, girls.

TOM. Another relapse—(*gets under table*)

CHARLIE. (*runs up* C.) It's all right, Tom.

TOM. (*comes out*) Say, what is all this about?

CHARLIE. (*down* R. *of Ott.*) Well, last night I was—one of those corkers—(*motion drinking*) You know—and I brought a fellow home with me—as a sort of squarer for the governor, I told him he was a Theosophist, and he's up and hired him to stay here as a sort of permanent fad——

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TOM. (R. *near table*) That's a good one on the old man—(*laughs*)

CHARLIE. Old man! It's on me—you may think it's funny, but I can't see where the joke comes in.

TOM. Why don't you get him out?

CHARLIE. How can I? All the doors are guarded—besides, he's got no clothes.

TOM. Then he was speaking of him, eh? and I, under that table with heart failure, thinking he alluded to me.

CHARLIE. Will you kindly let that paltry affair of yours drop for a moment and think of mine?

TOM. I'll go to the old man and tell—(*starts to go* C.)

CHARLIE. (*intercepts him—frightened*) You'll do nothing of the kind—don't mention it to a single soul—our only hope is to get him out. (*sees* BERNICE R. U. E.)

BERNICE. (*outside*) Tilly—Tilly——

CHARLIE. Bernice—not a word to her—I'll go in and see if I can get him out without murder.

(*Exit door* L. 1 E.)

TOM. (*following him* L.) Don't leave me alone—I don't want to see him again.

(*Enter* BERNICE R. U. E. *below stairs with yellow robe on.*)

BERNICE. Tom Valentine! (*comes down* R. *of Ott.*)

TOM. Yes; come to beard the lion in his den—but what is this? (*goes* L. C.)

BERNICE. We have all joined the Order of the Yellow Robe—our disciple is now in his daily trance.

TOM. (*aside*) If Charlie had his way, he'd be in his grave.

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BERNICE. Have you seen papa?

TOM. Don't mention that name so suddenly. Yes, I've seen him—but he didn't see me. I didn't come here to see him—there's another I want to see—you.

BERNICE. (*sits* R. *side Ott.*) Now, papa, is the best judge of these matters. Of course, when we first came from Kansas City, you were all very well—but I'm the daughter of a millionaire, and as we expect to enter the fold of the four hundred, you're not exactly as brilliant a match as I should make. Come—be sensible; let's forget and be good friends. (*offers hand*) I'll be a sister to you!

TOM. (L. C.) No, thanks, I have two of my own.

BERNICE. That's just like a man.

TOM. And exactly like a woman—but it's a bargain. (*Sits and takes her hand*) You'll marry and I'll marry, but we'll remain the best of friends.

(*Enters* GERTIE *with yellow robe on* R. U. E. *below stairs.*)

GERTIE. Tom Valentine!

TOM. (*rises, goes* L. C.—BERNICE *goes* R.) Same old Tom.

GERTIE. (*down* R. *of Ott.*) You know what Pop said—(*imitates kick*) But I like you all the more for having nerve enough to tell him you were big enough to play your own cards. Has he seen you?

TOM. Seen me? No; if he had, he'd have raised me.

(*Enter* MARIAN C. *door from* L.)

MARIAN. I trust I haven't kept you waiting—but I really had so many calls to make I could not possibly arrive sooner.

BERNICE. (R. C.—GERTIE *at piano—introducing*) Miss Hayste—Mr. Valentine. (*bow*)

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MARIAN. (*back of Ott.—to* BERNICE) I thought I saw you from my carriage window, going into Altman's——

BERNICE. Shopping—I bought the loveliest walking gown you ever saw—(*description to be given*) There were only two of them imported to this country. (MARIAN *goes* L. *and joins* TOM. TOM *and* MARIAN *talk apart. Enter* MRS. B. S., C. *door* L. C.)

MRS. B. S. (*up* C.) Oh, girls, listen! How'd do, how'd do—Why, Tom Valentine, how do you do? I've been shopping and bought the most beautiful dress—(*description to be given, identical with that of* BERNICE) There are only two like it in this country.

(*Exit* C. *to* R. *up stairs.*)

GERTIE. She's got the other. (*ring bell*)

BERNICE. Was anything ever more provoking? I won't wear it. (*Enter* TILLY C. *door from* L.) Tilly, when a package arrives from Atlman's for me, send it back at once.

TILLY. She was pooty mad already.

(*Exit* C. *door to* L.)

BERNICE. (*up* R. C.—*aside*) To think of all the women in New York, she should get that other dress! (*goes up* R. C. *and sits dejectedly chair* L. *of arch*)

MARIAN. (C. *crosses* R.) Mr. Valentine has just been telling me of a friend of his who has a broken heart.

GERTIE. (R.) Man or woman?

TOM. A woman's heart never breaks.

GERTIE. (*at table* R.—*sighs*) I'm glad I'm a woman.

MARIAN. (*near* GERTIE *at her* L.—*to* TOM) Are you sure?

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TOM. (*looking at* BERNICE—*who is up* L. C.) I think so, now. But I hope I'm mistaken. (*goes* L. *a step*)

MARIAN. (*feelingly*) You are.

BERNICE. (*rises up* C.—*aside*) He's flirting with her. (*up* C.)

GERTIE. (*crosses to door* L.—TOM *goes back of Ott.*) I wonder if Mr. Tweedle has come to—why, he's talking with Charlie! (*listens, aside, and sneaking away*) They're swearing!

MARIAN. (*crossing to table* R.) Oh, you will think better of women some day. Perhaps your friend was a little to blame, himself.

BERNICE. (*coming down* R. *of* TOM—*to* TOM) There's no necessity for carrying on our love affairs right before each other's eyes. (*crosses to* MARIAN R.)

TOM. (*aside*) Jealous! That's a good beginning (*goes up rather jubilant*)

MARIAN. I'm so glad Mr. Tweedle has made his home with you, and I know society will welcome you with open arms—if you'll get me a slip of paper, I'll write you a list of all my acquaintances. (*aside*) whom I don't know.

BERNICE. Come to my room—we'll write it there. (*they start up* R.)

MARIAN. (to *Tom*) Mr. Valentine, don't judge all women by one standard.

TOM. Indeed I don't—there are others.

MARIAN. (*to* BERNICE) I like your friend so much.

BERNICE. Friend? Oh, yes, we are the best of friends.

(*Exit* BERNICE *and* MARIAN R. U. E. *upstairs.*)

GERTIE. I'm going, too—you'll excuse me, but this is business; we've got a fad, and we're going to

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work it for it's worth. And I don't mind telling you, I'm sort of stuck on the fad, myself.

TOM. (*up* C.) So that's the lay of the land, eh? Charlie has put his foot in it. By Jove! An idea! If I should succeed in straightening the thing out, I might melt the old man's marble heart. I'll put on my thinking cap, anyway.

(*Enter* CHARLIE *door* L.)

CHARLIE. (*talking to* SHAVER) I'll get something for you.

SHAVER. You can't be too quick.

ERASTUS. (*outside* R. U. E.) Get out of my way.

TOM. (*rushing up* C.) The old man—I don't want to see him yet—I'm on to the game, and I'll help you out, and with one stone kill two birds.

(*Exit* C. *door to* L.)

CHARLIE. I'm both birds.

(*Enter* ERASTUS R. U. E. *below stairs, with robe.*)

ERASTUS. (*comes down* R. C.) Good idea, eh, CHARLIE? Sort of Li Hung Chang effect. When we give our reception we'll all wear 'em. I told you we'd get in, and by Jingo! we will—Is he safe? (*going* L. U. E.)

CHARLIE. (R. C.—*aside*) I hope he's dead! (*sits hopelessly at piano, elbows on key—head in hands*)

ERASTUS. Hey, Tweedle!

SHAVER. (*in room* L.) Who calls so loud?

ERASTUS. Here's your new robe. (*gives it*) All New York will worship at the Shrine—and I'm the shrine!

(*Enter* JENNINGS C. *door from* L.)

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JENNINGS. The papers are all ringing us up on the telephone—they all want to know when a reporter can interview Mr. Tweedle.

ERASTUS. (L. Tell them he has nothing to say. Mark! I'm running this campaign! We are on the verge of society——

(*Exit* JENNINGS C. *to* L.—*followed by* ERASTUS.)

CHARLIE. Verge—I'm down the precipice, mangled to pieces.

(*Enter* SHAVER *with robe* L. U. E.)

SHAVER. Does this set right in the neck?

CHARLIE. (*seated at piano*) Yes—right in the neck. Say, what are you going to do about this reception?

SHAVER. (*coming* C.) I'm in the hands of my friends.

CHARLIE. (*rises, crosses* R. C. *fiercely*) Friends, eh?—You've got to get out of here.

SHAVER. (L. C.) Then "Lead, Kindly Light."

CHARLIE. Will you look at this thing seriously?

SHAVER. (*sits on ottoman nonchalantly*) I have ——I have calmly thought it all over. I wanted to go home, but you purloined my wardrobe, I think I'll tell the old——

CHARLIE. (*crosses to him*) No—no. That would be my finish—you must escape!

SHAVER. I'm sick and tired of your ethereal propositions. I am here ready to go—but you must provide the way.

(*Enter* GERTIE R. U. E. *from below stairs.*)

GERTIE. (CHARLIE *goes up* C. *in fit of desperation*) You have recovered from your trance? (*down* R. C. *to* C.)

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SHAVER. (*rises*) Yes, but I expect another.

GERTIE. Were you in a far-off world?

SHAVER. No such luck. That is, no such lucky circumstances. I was painfully in this world, with your brother.

GERTIE. Do you like my robe?

SHAVER. Beautiful!

GERTIE. It's a trifle full——

SHAVER. (*sits* C.) I wish I was.

GERTIE. I'll have it taken in.

SHAVER. Don't say that—when you say "taken in," you touch a sympathetic chord.

CHARLIE. Amen with all my heart.

(*Enter* BERNICE R. U. E. *downstairs.*)

BERNICE. (GERTIE *crosses* R. *from* CHARLES, *up* R. U. *to piano*) Mr. Tweedle, Prince may I call you Prince? (*comes* L. *of Otto.*)

SHAVER. Why, that's a dog's name.

BERNICE. How droll you are—But may I call you Prince?

SHAVER. (*in front of sofa* L. *Crosses* L.) Yes—— footprints.

BERNICE. What an exalted state your mind must be in. You can commune with spirits.

SHAVER. Not half as well as your brother—(CHARLIE *groans—enter* MRS. B. S.—R. U. E. *down stairs with* MARIAN *in Yellow Robes*)

MRS. B. S. (*to* MARIAN) Yes, it's the costliest gown I have seen in any of the shops. (*to* ALL) They said they had another just like it. I'm sorry one of the girls didn't get it! (*comes* L. C.)

BERNICE. (*crosses to* R.) Mr. Tweedle, have you been with your affinity since last we saw you?

SHAVER. Yes, we had a few drinks—that is, draughts at the fountain of knowledge—(*aside*) This is getting absolutely monotonous.

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(*Enter* ERASTUS C. *from* L. *with papers and yellow books. Enter* TILLY *from* L. TILLY *comes down* C. *with* ERASTUS.)

ERASTUS. Ah, ha! We've got 'em now, girls.

GERTIE. Who, papa?

ERASTUS. Who? Society, of course. What are we here for? (*lays books on table, handing each a paper; retains one*) Look at this—and this—and this. Didn't I tell you if ever I had a chance to apply business principles to this thing, I'd fetch 'em? Read them big headlines. In big letters on the first page, too. (ERASTUS *chases* TILLY *up stage—exits* TILLY C. *to* L. ERASTUS *comes down* L.)

MARIAN. (*reads*) The only American who ever attained Nirvana.

ERASTUS. (MRS. B. S. *just back of Ott.—patting* SHAVER *on shoulder*) What do you think of that, my boy?

SHAVER. (L. CHARLIE *goes up* C. *then drops down* L.—*aside*—) Five years at hard labor, at least.

ERASTUS. Go on, go on.

MARIAN. (R. *reads*) Will he become a social lion?

ERASTUS. Ah, there it is! Will he become a social lion. That's the kernel of the whole thing—will he become a social lion?

SHAVER. (*aside—waitingly*) A lamb—a lamb to the slaughter—that's what I'll be.

MRS. B. S. (*back of Ott.*) How did the newspapers get it, ERASTUS?

ERASTUS. They were glad to get it—jumped at it.

BERNICE. (R.—*crosses* L. *of* MARIAN) But why?

ERASTUS. Why? Because he was a Christian minister, of course, and renounced his religion——

OMNES. A minister?

ERASTUS. (*crosses to girls*—CHARLIE *comes down to* L. *of* SHAVER) Y—e—es! Didn't you know

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that? (*seizing a paper*) Look at this—here—that little item dated from Boston under the big item there. It's in all the papers—came by Associated Press.

SHAVER. (*crossing to* CHARLIE, *kicks and nudges him with his elbows*) Why didn't you tell me I was a minister?

CHARLIE. (L. *of* SHAVER) How the deuce did I know? It wasn't so in the passenger list.

SHAVER. You might have known I was something out of the common when it said Boston.

BERNICE. (*reads*) The Reverend James Tweedle is well known here——

MRS. B. S. (*reads*) His friends who were seen expressed the greatest surprise.

MARIAN. (*reads*) When told of his renunciation of Christianity——

GERTIE. (*reads*) And espousal of Buddhism——

BERNICE. But how is this to secure us social recognition, papa?

MRS. B. S. I've a curiosity——

ERASTUS. (R. C.) There it is—that's the word. "Curiosity"—especially woman's curiosity—properly directed by business talk will accomplish more than all the perseverance or all the money in the world. I tell you when it comes down to a matter of strictly business, ERASTUS Underholt can backfire the whole lot of them. Don't you see how it will be when we excite curiosit-e-e? Everybody will want to see, what nobody is permitted to see, and they will flee, to our soir-e-e, and we will be select you see, and only admit lay Grande Mond-e-e, which is French for the very first qualit-e-e, and the others will rejected be! (*laughing*) Ha, ha, ha! Didn't know your old Dad was a poet, did ye?

MARIAN. Really, Mr. Underholt, I must compliment you.

ERASTUS. Think it'll fetch 'em, eh?

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MARIAN. Oh, it is too positively fetching for any use—perfect!

ERASTUS. There's the opinion of a real society lady, girls.

MARIAN. But the greatest finesse is necessary.

ERASTUS. There's the word—finesse!

BERNICE. We must be in to no one.

MRS. B. S. (L. *of* ERASTUS) We must observe the greatest secrecy.

OMNES. Oh, of course.

MARIAN. (*crosses to him*) Ah! here is a list I have prepared, containing—(*offering paper*) the names of the twenty representative families of New York.

ERASTUS. That's the stuff! (*reading*) "Van Allston De Peyster"—Ah, now we have it—I'll have invitations sent to all of them for the reception this very day. (MRS. B. S. *goes up* L. *of Ott.*)

SHAVER. (*aside*) I'll make a last appeal. I must get out of here. (*Aloud, to* ERASTUS) Ah, you have made a terrible mistake.

OMNES. Mistake! (ERASTUS *crosses to* C.)

CHARLIE. (*extreme* L.) Yes, father——

SHAVER. (L. *in front of sofa*) Yes—I never was a Christian minister in my life.

OMNES. Not a minister!

SHAVER. No, I'm not! (CHARLIE *goes up* L.) The newspapers have got me mixed up with an uncle of mine of the same name.

ERASTUS. Oh, your uncle is able to look out for himself. (MRS. B. S. *joins* CHARLIE *up* L.)

OMNES. Why yes, etc. etc.

SHAVER. You cannot appreciate how all this noise and excitement jars upon a sensitive soul like mine.

OMNES. (*sympathetically*) O-h-h-h!

SHAVER. It shocks me—that's what it does—it shocks me dreadfully! (CHARLIE—*kicks* SHAVER *with knee*)

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BERNICE. (*sighs*) Ah, I know his feelings perfectly.

MARIAN. (*sighs*) Yes, and I. (*converse with* BERNICE)

GERTIE. (*extreme* R.) Me, too!

SHAVER. (L. C.) I beg you to allow me to withdraw.

ERASTUS. (C.) Withdraw! After all the money I've spent on this thing, and just when I've worked it up to a success? No, sir! I won't hear of it. I hold you to your contract. (*crosses to him—patting him on the back*) You brace up, my boy. I tell you your fortune and reputation's made; you stick to me, an' I'll make a lion of you. (BERNICE *goes up* C.—*Comes—down* L. *of* SHAVER—*going up—at door* R. U. E.)

SHAVER. (*aside*) I've been a-lyin' now for two days, and I've had enough of it.

ERASTUS. (*at door* R. U.—*aside*) Say, GERTIE—that feller's a chicken, he'd get away if he could. Well, I'll see that he don't.

(*Exit* R. U. E. *below stairs.*)

BERNICE. (*entreatingly*) Do not think of leaving us, Mr. Tweedle.

MRS. B. S. Erastus is a little thoughtless at times, but he means well.

GERTIE. (*half tearfully*) Just when I was becoming so interested, too—it's real mean of you—there!

MARIAN. I think you are really to be envied, Mr. Tweedle. There are many who have gone through a divorce court or breach of promise case without gaining half the notoriety you have had.

SHAVER. (*aside*) I'm just starting—give me a chance.

BERNICE. (*appealingly*) Say that you have reconsidered, Mr. Tweedle, and will stay.

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GERTIE. (*crosses to him—lays hand on his arm, appealingly*) Yes, do, for my sake.

MRS. B. S. (*coming down on his* L.—*reprovingly*) Gertrude—I trust Mr. Tweedle will remain for all our sakes.

MARIAN. Consider the fame it will bring you.

BERNICE. And the fortune.

GERTIE. Yes, and the converts you will make—here are four, and papa makes five, and perhaps Charlie——

CHARLIE. (*tartly*) Oh, never mind Charlie! (*goes* L.)

SHAVER. (*fervidly*) How can I resist your pleadings, ladies? I love you all so much.

OMNES. Ah-h-h! (*girls go* R. *a couple of steps*)

SHAVER. (*follows them*) With the broad, comprehensive, brotherly love. Are you all in? (*puts arms around them all*)

OMNES. (*emphatically*) Oh!

SHAVER. That I couldn't leave you if I would—and I wouldn't if I could.

OMNES. (*embracing* SHAVER) You are so good.

(*Enter* TILLY C. *takes yellow scarf off of screen and comes down stage* L. *of Ott.*)

SHAVER. (*aside*) Leave here! Well, I guess not!

OMNES. But what are these for?

SHAVER. Copies of the "Light of Asia?" We'll adjourn to the parlor and I will set each of you a lesson to learn from our beautiful philosophy. (SHAVER *and* LADIES *exit* R. U. E.—CHARLIE *hits* TILLY *with pillow—he takes from armchair at mantlepiece—exit* TILLY C. *to* L.)

CHARLIE. What the devil am I to do? (*sits dejectedly on Ott.*) He positively doesn't know enough philosophy to last him thirty seconds—and here the Governor has advertised him like a circus. Oh, I

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wish Tom were here. (*groans*) I must have advice —and he could help me—I have it! I played a minister at college last year—I have the clothes— I'll be the real JAMES TWEEDLE and drive this fellow out.

(*Exit* L. 1 *enter* TWEEDLE C. *from* L.)

TWEEDLE. Am I to find nobody about this house at all? I shall stay here until I've seen and had an explanation from this impostor, who has assumed my name—that I am determined upon. (*comes down front of sofa* L.)

(*Enter* SHAVER R. U. E.)

SHAVER. I've read of soft easy snaps. (*turns and looks toward* R. U. E.) but I never thought I'd fall into anything like this. If there is any such thing as Nirvana, I've got it now. (*sees* TWEEDLE) But it's gone. (*comes down* R. *of Ott.—to* TWEEDLE) May I ask who you are?

JAS. TWEEDLE. I am the Reverend James Tweedle.

SHAVER. Sit down, Mr. Tweedle, sit down.

TWEEDLE. I am in no humor for sitting, sir— not to put too fine a point upon it, I am mad, sir, mad as a hen on a hot griddle.

SHAVER. (*assumed nonchalance*) I can understand that a hen would not care to set under those circumstances.

TWEEDLE. I am glad that you perceive the gravity of the situation.

SHAVER. Yes, indeed, sir. Any true disciple of Gautama would be grieved indeed to see a hen upon a hot griddle.

TWEEDLE. But all this is beside the question.

SHAVER. You introduced the hen—I didn't.

TWEEDLE. (*taking paper from pocket*) Perhaps you will enlighten me concerning this item in the newspaper this morning.

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SHAVER. Concerning me?

TWEEDLE. No, sir, concerning me. I am James Tweedle, of Boston.

SHAVER. So am I.

TWEEDLE. I am the James Tweedle who arrived on the New York.

SHAVER. So am I.

TWEEDLE. Impossible, sir.

SHAVER. Why, impossible? There are other Tweedles. Tweedle is not an uncommon name. Now, your brother's name would be Tweedle.

TWEEDLE. True, my brother John went to St. Louis many years ago.

SHAVER. (*aside*) I'll take a chance with Brother John. (*aloud*) My father's name is John, and he lives in St. Louis.

TWEEDLE. But my brother died there twenty years ago.

SHAVER. Ah! (*sentimentally*) You call it death, but we—we like to think of them as amongst us always. The dewdrop slips into the shining sea. My father slipped into the river when I was but a year old.

TWEEDLE. But, I tell you, my brother was never married.

SHAVER. (*affecting a cry*) Don't say that—it is true, my father's marriage was a secret one—but it was all right, Uncle!

TWEEDLE. Uncle!

SHAVER. Oh, I am sure you are my uncle. The circumstances are too remarkable to be accidental. But what brings you here?

TWEEDLE. I have severed my connection with the ministry, and my business in this country is the organization of a joint-stock company for the cultivation of the Kola nut on a gigantic scale.

SHAVER. (*aside*) If they see him here, I'll be a Theosophic corpse, not that way—(*aloud*) Step in

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here. (*crosses* L. *to door*) And we'll talk it over, Uncle. Quite a rough trip we had.

TWEEDLE. "We!" You were not on the boat, sir.

SHAVER. Well, you see, I was broke, and had to come over steerage—step in here and I will tell you the story of my life—(*aside*) and probable death!

(*Exit door* L. SHAVER *and* TWEEDLE. *Enter* TOM C. *from* L. *with satchel and hat box and newspaper.*)

TOM. I have a plan now that can't fail. (*reads*) The friends of the Reverend James Tweedle were surprised to learn he had left the ministry—I played a minister at college two years ago and had sense enough to keep all the clothes. I have them here and I'll step into this room—(R.) and put them on. And when I have forced this impostor to a full confession, I'll make myself known to Underholt and claim my reward.

(*Exit* R. 1. SHAVER *enters from door* L. 1 E. *followed by* TWEEDLE *pushes* TWEEDLE *back and locks door.*)

SHAVER. (*aside*) If Underholt sees him—I'll go to a dungeon cell. (*Enter* TILLY *with box*) Ah, fair Teuton, what is it you bear? (C. *from* R. *she starts* R. U. E.)

TILLY. Dot? Dot's a dress for Mrs. Beekman-Streete. (*comes down* L. *of Ott.*) Say, I tole you somedings, if you don't tell no one. Dey both buy de same kind of dresses and Miss Bernice got so mad dat de old hen got some like hers, dat she tole me to send it back alretty.

SHAVER. A light breaks in! I will have to jolly this girl and get that dress. Tilly, did you ever love?

TILLY. Nein.

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SHAVER. Nine! That's bigamy. But that matters not. I'm ten—love me.

TILLY. For what yet?

SHAVER. I need a woman's love—and a suit of clothes! If I can't get a suit, I'll take a dress. When Miss Bernice's dress arrives, instead of sending it back, fetch it to me, and I'll give you two dollars.

TILLY. You give me two dollars for dat dress, and maybe I get put by der jail in, I guess nit!

SHAVER. No, I'll pay for it. (*kisses her*) And give you two dollars besides. That seals the bargain. That in itself is worth fifty cents.

TILLY. Give me four more kisses, and keep the two dollars.

SHAVER. That were improvident—there is one—(*kisses her*) You have three still in bank for a rainy day—and I hope we will have pleasant weather.

TILLY. I took dis up by Mrs. Beekman-Streete, and den I come down and get one more, and keep two for dot day when the rain comes alretty.

(*Exit* R. U. E. *upstairs.*)

SHAVER. Where will all this end? (*starts to door* L. 1 E. *Enter* GERTIE R. U. E. *below stairs.*)

GERTIE. Oh, Mr. Tweedle.

SHAVER. Now I'm a goner!

GERTIE. (*comes* R. *of sofa*) I've come in to keep you company—you must be awfully lonesome.

SHAVER. No—I have my other self to argue with.

GERTIE. Then you don't—want me——

(*Enter* TILLY *from stairs, go out* C. *to* L.)

SHAVER. Yes, I do want you—I want you to go in the other room and study the "Light of Asia."

GERTIE. Let's sit here. (*indicating ottoman*) And you can explain.

SHAVER. No, we can't sit here. Now, leave me—I feel another trance coming on.

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GERTIE. Are you going to soar away?

SHAVER. No, but I think I'll go away sore—that is—go—the spirits are here—they wish to converse—perhaps with you—(*knock at door* L. TWEEDLE) There they are now—go—go—(*putting her up* R.)

GERTIE. When they get through with you, may I have you all to myself?

SHAVER. Yes—all that's left of me. (GERTIE *exits* R. U. E. SHAVER *starts* L. 1 E. ERASTUS *enters* R. C.) Oh!

ERASTUS. Come here; don't go flying away like that—say, I think you are beginning to fluke—I want you to understand that I own you, body and soul. (TWEEDLE *knocks at door* L. 1 E.) What's that?

SHAVER. Oh, that—that's me——

ERASTUS. (*coming* C.) You? (TWEEDLE *knocks*)

TWEEDLE. (*outside* L. 1 E.) Open this door.

SHAVER. (*at door*) That's my uncle—the missionary.

ERASTUS. What does he want?

SHAVER. He just came to pay a social call.

ERASTUS. (L. *of Ott.*) On me?

SHAVER. Yes. (ERASTUS *starts*)

ERASTUS. Then I will look him over. (*Starts for door* L. 1 E.)

SHAVER. (*stops*) No—you see, he's a peculiar uncle—he won't like you.

ERASTUS. He won't? Then he'll get out of my house. (*goes* C.)

SHAVER (*follows him*) You see, he's heard you want me, and he's jealous—he wants me to go away with him.

ERASTUS. Before the reception? (SHAVER *nods*) Oh, the kidnapper! (*opens the door*) What's to be done here?

SHAVER. (*don't understand this*) Let him out—make it pleasant for him, until after the reception.

ERASTUS. What—loose? (SHAVER *nods. Cross-*

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*ing* R.) Say, you said he was a missionary—fetch him out—and I'll work him off on Arabella. (SHAVER *opens the door* L. 1 *and cross* C.)

(*Enter* TWEEDLE L. 1 E.)

SHAVER. (R. *of ottoman—introducing*) Mr. Underholt, my uncle—James Tweedle from Africa—(TWEEDLE *crosses to him*)

ERASTUS. (*shaking hands warmly*) Delighted to know, you, sir, delighted.

SHAVER. I explained, Uncle, to our friend here, that dreadful mistake in the paper., confounding you and me.

ERASTUS. Yes, yes; that's all right—we understand that. Been on missionary services, eh?

TWEEDLE. Yes, in the wilds of Africa.

ERASTUS. (*effusively*) Now, this is what I call a fortunate coincidence. The heathen in foreign lands is a perfect hobby with my sister.

TWEEDLE. Indeed!

ERASTUS. Perfect hobby! (*taking him up* C.) If she thought I would let a heathen escape without meeting her, she would have a fit. (*Exit* ERASTUS *and* TWEEDLE C.)

SHAVER. Thank Heaven! Now, if that dress would only arrive.

(*Enter* TILLY *with boxes* C. *from* L. SHAVER *takes boxes.*)

Good! You are my balm of Gilead. (*kiss*) *That* one I won't charge you for—you have three in bank still. (*Exit door* L. 1)

TILLY. I bet I get in trouble mit dem dresses—but I got even on Miss Bernice, she all de time talk about her father—but I watch him and see dot nobody don't done him up.

(*Enter* GLASSMAN *with glass* C. *from* L.)

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Dere is der place. (*tries it in screen*) You got it too big—you're Irish.

GLASSMAN. Well, I'll just take it downstairs and cut it off. (*Exit* GLASSMAN C. *to* L.)

TILLY. All right, I wish I took dose two dollars instead of dose kisses yet. (*go up* L. C.)

(*Enter* BERNICE R. U. E. *below stairs.*)

BERNICE. (C.) Papa said the elder Mr. Tweedle had arrived. Have you seen him, Tilly?

TILLY. No, ma'am.

(*Enter* TOM R. U. E., *disguised.*)

BERNICE. (*coming down* R. *of ottoman* TILLY *busies herself up stage*) Oh, you are Mr. Tweedle.

TOM. (R.) Yes, just arrived from Africa.

BERNICE. (R. C.) Papa said we were to entertain you.

TOM. He's so kind.

BERNICE. If you like, I'll show you the floral decorations for our reception to-night.

TOM. Charmed.

(*Exit* BERNICE *and* TOM C. *door to* R.)

TILLY. He was a sight. (*down to* L. *Enter* CHARLIE L. U. *disguised*) Excuse me—(*yell. Enter* MARIAN R. U.)

MARIAN. (*from stairs*) Ah, the elder Mr. Tweedle, I believe? Mr. Underholt said we were to do all we could to make your visit pleasant, and if you will allow me to escort you, I'll show you the gallery. (CHARLIE *and* MARIAN *exit* L. U. E.)

TILLY. Dey must be twins.

(*Enter* SHAVER *dressed in dress* L. 1 E.)

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TILLY. Oh, you look like a real woman.

SHAVER. Do I.

TILLY. Yah. Give me one more.

SHAVER. (*kisses her*) You're getting extravagant—you've only one left.

TILLY. Und now I go down and talk mit dot glass man. He don't charge me for dose kisses like you do. (*Exit* C. *to* L.)

SHAVER. Now to make my escape if I don't meet someone.

(*Goes up* C., *looks* R. *Sees* MRS. B. S. R. U., *dressed in suit like* SHAVER'S. *She is adjusting her glove.* SHAVER *crosses to arch up* C. *and runs back of screen.*)

MRS. B. S. (*speaks outside*) All right; I'll be back in a minute.

(*Enter* R. U. *from* R., *continuation of speech.*)

What a dignified, handsome man that Mr. Tweedle is, and what a compliment he paid me. Well, I flatter myself I did make an impression on him in this dress. (*goes down* R.)

(*Enter* TILLY C. *from* L. *Sees* MRS. B. S. and thinks *it's* TWEEDLE.)

TILLY. Say, Tweedle, give me dot last kiss what you owe me.

MRS. B. S. Why, Matilda!

TILLY. (*screams*) On the wrong street. (*Exit* C. D. *in a rush*)

MRS. B. S. (*crosses* L., *as she crosses,* SHAVER *hurriedly crosses and hides behind screen up* C. R.) The idea, a servant trying to kiss me! I never heard of such impudence. I wonder where I left my glasses? I declare I can't see straight since I took that last glass of wine to Mr. Tweedle's health. (*bus.*

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*of looking for glasses. Turns suddenly to screen, perceives her side face through open part of screen. In reality it is* SHAVER'S *face as he peeks through screen; stands up in front of open part.* SHAVER *confronts her*) Don't I look lovely. (*starts to fix sleeves, taking left and right view of dress*) Not such a bad figure, either. What a horrible fib I told Mr. Tweedle about my age being only thirty-two. (*hearty laugh. Leans forward. Upon straightening up, discovers that* SHAVER'S *hat is on one side.* Now, look at my hat! It's always hanging over my nose, or ear, or some place. (*bus. of taking out hat pin, putting pin in mouth, and adjusting hat, which* SHAVER *imitates. While hat pin is in her mouth, tries to mumble. Puts hat pin in hat, gives a slight scream*) I declare I'll pierce my brain some day with these hatpins. There, that's better. Thirty-two. (*laughs*) Well, I don't think I look more than thirty-two. Scarcely a wrinkle to be seen, except here— (*bus. of putting hands to forehead*) And here— (*puts hands to chin*) Arabella, you naughty girl, it's high time you set your cap, if you wish to catch number three. Oh, that Mr. Tweedle, I could just squeeze him! He is too sweet for anything. (*bus. of holding arms as if to embrace him. Throws kiss at mirror*) Ta, ta, Arabella. No, no, you must not waste the nectar of your lips—you are waiting for Mr. Tweedle.

(*Exit* R. U. E.—*front of screen.*)

(SHAVER *clings to left side of screen as if exhausted. Comes from behind screen much agitated, fanning himself. Enter* JAMES TWEEDLE R. U. E. SHAVER *turns suddenly, confronting* TWEEDLE *falls into his arms.*)

TWEEDLE. This is my chance. (SHAVER *gets away and plays the scene with back to* TWEEDLE)

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SHAVER. (*comes down* L. C., *back to* TWEEDLE *all through scene. Embarrassed, kittenish air*) My uncle——

TWEEDLE. Mrs. Beekman-Streete—will you look with favor upon my suit?

SHAVER. (*aside*) I'd change it for this dress. (*aloud*) Assure me you did not hear my foolish prattle.

TWEEDLE. I assure you, I heard nothing—I have another mission—you are lonesome.

SHAVER. I am—of course Erastus is very kind, looking after my estate in Kansas City.

TWEEDLE. Estate?

SHAVER. I can't spend my annuity of twenty thousand dollars alone.

TWEEDLE. Twenty thousand dollars!

SHAVER. My first husband, Beekman, was a cyclonic-swearing poker player from Dakota.

TWEEDLE. Ah!

SHAVER. While Number Two's profanity was blizzardy—he only played pinochle.

TWEEDLE. But I will only play Old Maid or Casino.

SHAVER. Ah! how I have longed for the loving support of a sympathetic soul who would look after my interests!

TWEEDLE. Mrs. Streete—may I dare to hope?

SHAVER. But we have known each other such a little while——

TWEEDLE. But it is not as though we were young and giddy——

SHAVER. I must ask a little time—you shall have my answer when I am more composed. (*goes up* L.)

TWEEDLE. Every moment will be an agony of suspense.

SHAVER. I will not detain you long. (*Exits* C. *to* R.)

TWEEDLE. (*sol.*) This is not so bad. Twenty

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thousand a year—and her home life here is distasteful to her. But she certainly lost no time in giving me to understand— (*down* L.)

(*Enter* MRS. B. S. C. *from* R. *down stairs.*)

MRS. B. S. (*aside*) My fan—where can I have left it? (*goes* L. C.)

TWEEDLE. (L. *as she starts to go* R. U. *Advancing eagerly*) No, you shall not escape me. You have pledged me your love, and you are mine.

MRS. B. S. (*down* L. C., *struggling*) Release me, sir! How dare you?

TWEEDLE. (*over to her, kisses hand*) No more profane, poker-playing Beekmans shall mar your life.

MRS. B. S. (*horrified, aside*) Horrors, he is mad!

TWEEDLE. (*drawing her to him*) No more cyclonic-swearing, pinochle-playing Streetes from Dakota.

MRS. B. S. (*alarmed, aside*) Merciful heavens! (*breaks away to* L.) I am sure he's a raving lunatic. Streete, the Superintendent of a Sabbath School!

TWEEDLE. (*coming down on her* R.) *We need* not touch one penny of your large annuity.

MRS. B. S. Large annuity? Now I am certain he's crazy. (*looks, crosses* R.—*aloud*) Where did you get all this extraordinary information?

TWEEDLE. (*aside*) Can it be possible the poor woman has a mental affliction? (*goes* C. *a step*)

MRS. B. S. Who told you all this?

TWEEDLE. Why, you yourself?—here—not five minutes ago, with your head resting upon my breast, you——

MRS. B. S. I! (*down* R.) My head upon your breast—how dare you, sir!

TWEEDLE. Do you deny that you were in this

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room a few minutes ago and that you made what you were pleased to call "a few prattling remarks?"

MRS. B. S. Before the mirror! (*confused, indignant*) You were eavesdropping! How could you be so dishonorable! (*crosses* L.)

TWEEDLE. You wrong me grossly. You told me you loved me.

MRS. B. S. I deny it!

TWEEDLE. Deny it!

MRS. B. S. Emphatically! Nothing of the sort ever occurred.

TWEEDLE. Madam, do you question my veracity? (*crosses to* L. *of her*)

MRS. B. S. No, but I question your senses. (*going up* R.) I will leave you until you have recovered them. (*Exit* MRS. B. S. R. U. E.)

TWEEDLE. Mad! Mad as a March hare. I dream of joy, only to be shattered by a rude awakening.

(*Enter* ERASTUS *door* C. *from* R.)

Mr. Underholt, do you not think it would have been the better plan to have given me a hint concerning your sister?

ERASTUS. (*up* R. C.) Hint? What d'ye mean?

TWEEDLE. (L. C.) Her mental condition.

ERASTUS. Mental condition! Explain yourself.

TWEEDLE. You do not know?

ERASTUS. Know what?

TWEEDLE. It becomes my painful duty to inform you, sir, that your sister is mad! (*crosses* L.)

ERASTUS. What's she mad about?

TWEEDLE. She is crazy, sir—positively insane.

ERASTUS. Pooh, pooh!

TWEEDLE. If we may retire here for a moment, I will convince you that I am not mistaken, sir.

ERASTUS. Oh, very well, step right in there. (*indicating* L. U. E., *permits* TWEEDLE *to enter door* L. U. E. *As* ERASTUS *is about to enter, he sees* SHAVER

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*coming on*) Ah, here she comes now. Crazy! It's my opinion he's crazy himself.

(*Enter* SHAVER *as though pursued Comes down to door* L. *He is closely followed by* TILLY.)

SHAVER. No use—I can't get out—hedged in on every side. (*Exit* SHAVER *door* L. 1 E.)

(*Enter* ERASTUS *followed by* TWEEDLE L. U. E. TILLY *makes a pretense of dusting furniture with her apron.*)

ERASTUS. (*agitated—aside*) My sister holding secret meetings with this young Tweedle, and with the door locked. (*aloud*) What does this mean? (C.)

TWEEDLE. It only verifies.

ERASTUS. (R.) Ah, ugh! Call that a proof of insanity, do ye? (*to* TILLY) Come here, girl, (TILLY *advances*) Why did your mistress go in that room?

TILLY. She didn't vent in dot room, sir.

ERASTUS. Well, of all the barefaced—Wasn't you in this room when we came in?

TILLY. Yah, I vos here.

ERASTUS. And you tell me she didn't go in there? (TILLY *shakes her head*) Who was it, then?

TILLY. No woman didn't vent in when I vos here. (*go up*)

TWEEDLE. After all, we may be mistaken.

ERASTUS. Mistaken! Maybe you think I don't know my own sister? Think I'm crazy, don't ye? (*crosses* L., *knocks at door* L. 1 E.) Arabella! Arabella! (*no response*) Tweedle! Open this door, I say—d'ye hear me?

TWEEDLE. (*goes up* R. C. *Aside, going* R. U.) I have no right to be a witness to this family affair—I will retire.

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(*Exit* TWEEDLE C. *to* R.)

ERASTUS. If you don't open this door instantly, I will call a policeman and have it broken open.

TILLY. (*aside*) I tole him to trow der suit on der conservatory if he got caught. I go ketch him. (*Exit* TILLY L. C.)

ERASTUS. (*second time knocking on door* L.) Arabella! Arabella! I say! I can see you in there—— .

(MRS. B. S. *appears on stairs,* MARIAN, GERTIE *and* BERNICE *appear* R. U. E.)

MRS. B. S. Well, what is it, Erastus? (*hastily descends followed by* MARIAN, GERTIE *and* BERNICE)

ERASTUS. (*down* L., *astounded*) What, are you here and in there, too? What is the meaning of all this?

MRS. B. S. (*down* R. *of ottoman*) Where is that dreadful man?

ERASTUS. To what dreadful man do you refer? How did you get out of that room without my seeing you?

MRS. B. S. Out of which room?

ERASTUS. That room there!

MRS. B. S. I wasn't in that room.

ERASTUS. I saw you with my own eyes enter that room not two minutes ago and lock the door behind you.

GERTIE. Why, papa—Auntie has been upstairs for ten minutes, telling me of the dreadful actions of that Mr. Tweedle.

ERASTUS. I could have sworn—what's the matter with this darned house, anyway?

MRS. B. S. Something dreadful going on—we will all be murdered.

ERASTUS. Murdered!

MRS. B. S. I tell you that Mr. Tweedle is violently insane.

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ERASTUS. He's just as positive you are crazy.

MRS. B. S. I! Listen—half an hour ago I came into this room to adjust my new costume in the mirror there— (TILLY *appears at back listening* L. U. E.)

ERASTUS. Mirror! What mirror?

MRS. B. S. The mirror in the screen there——

ERASTUS. There's no mirror in that screen. It was broken this morning.

MRS. B. S. (*going up to screen* R. *of* C. ERASTUS *faces her on her* L.) I am perfectly aware of what I am saying—you need not contradict me. I refer to this mirror here— (*goes to screen—feels in open space, puts hand to breast, comes front in half fainting condition, falls in chair placed to receive her*) Heavens! Can it be possible that I am losing my mind? (ERASTUS *pats her hand.* GERTIE *gets water from table.* BERNICE *produces smelling salts. All crowd around her. Enter* GLASSMAN *with mirror, which just fits the open space in screen. Places it in position, holding it there.*)

MRS. B. S. (*appealingly.*) But there was a mirror there a few moments ago, tell me that you believe me when I say, there was one there.

ERASTUS. (*humoring*) Oh, yes, there was one there. (*aside*) I'd better send for Dr. Giles. (*going up, sees his reflection in mirror, screams and starts to door* L.) What—is it haunted? (*Exit* GLASSMAN *with glass* C.) It's you, Tweedle. (ERASTUS *goes up and sees there is no glass and is dumbfounded, starts for door* L. *again. Enter* SHAVER L. 1 *in yellow robe* TWEEDLE, R. U. E. CHARLIE L. U. E. *and* TOM C. *They stand in row at* C. *as* ERASTUS *turns and sees them, he falls to knees completely nonplussed;* SHAVER *falls on ottoman*)

CURTAIN

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## ACT III

SCENE:—*Drawing room at* UNDERHOLT'S *house. Chandelier lighted, piano* L. 2. *Piano lamp lighted, sofa* L. C., *table* R. C., *furniture ad lib., to make up an elegant apartment. Large* C. *opening and openings* R. *and* L. 3 *and* R. *and* L. 1.

DISCOVERED:—*At rise*: CHARLIE.

CHARLIE. (*seated on sofa* L.) One hour more—ah, I dare not think. Why did I ever bring that man Shaver here?

(*Enter* TILLY *with tray* C. *from* R., *two glasses, champagne bottle and note—takes all but note with her when she exits.*)

TILLY. Here's a note dot come for you one hour ago.

CHARLIE. (*rises and goes up* L. C.) An hour ago! What made you hurry with it?

TILLY. I always was in a hurry.

CHARLIE. Who brought it, Tilly?

TILLY. A little shaver.

CHARLIE. (*shocked*) What, another!

TILLY. What?

CHARLIE. Another shaver?

TILLY. My sister in Germany has got two little shavers.

CHARLIE. May angels guard and bless them.

TILLY. Ain't that nice? I'll tell my sister what you said when I write some more letters by Germany. (*Exit* L. 2 E.)

CHARLIE. (*opens note*) "Charlie dear: Why have you been so cold to me of late? Tell me why.

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I want to see you before the reception. Will come early, Yours,

MARIAN."

Well, if anybody wants to see me, they'd better come before the reception. I don't know what to say to that poor, dear girl. When my father learns of this mock reception, I'll be kicked out of the house, and I won't be able to support myself, let alone a wife. (*goes to piano-stool*)

(*Enter* MARIAN C. *from* L.)

Marian dear—owing to the fact that my father is going to kick me out of the house, it will be impossible for me to marry you—and it only illustrates the old adage:—"When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window."

MARIAN. (*comes down* L. *behind him, arm around his neck*) But if the wife keeps the door locked, poverty can't get in, Charlie.

CHARLIE. Ah, Marian, that's a very pretty theory, but this is not a theory it's a condition that confronts me.

MARIAN. (*comes* C.) Then I was right; our engagement at the Springs was only a summer flirtation.

CHARLES. (*follows her*) Ah, Marian, I——

MARIAN. There, Charlie, don't try to explain—it's the same old story—a summer day—you there, I here—a glance—a tender squeeze of the hand—summer again—train back to New York, and the old janitor has nothing before to sweep into the sea but broken hearts, all pierced with arrows. (*goes* R.)

CHARLIE. Marian, I——

MARIAN. There, there—I'm not the injured party; I, too, was but a summer girl. (*sits* L. *of table* R.)

CHARLIE. (*going to her*) Can't you see how

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hard you are making all this for me? It isn't my fault—it's father's.

MARIAN. What did he say?

CHARLIE. You know what he says—he won't have anything further to do with me. Wants me to do something for myself—says I'm worthless, shiftless, wants me to prove that there's some metal in me.

MARIAN. Well, I always thought you had some brass.

CHARLIE. Are you getting discouraged?

MARIAN. No, Charlie, only I was thinking of the other side. Do you remember how seriously we used to talk of marriage at the Springs?

CHARLIE. (R. C.) Yes. We swore we'd be nothing to each other but just chums, playmates, and here we are—sweethearts.

MARIAN. But not for long, I fear—You know we may look at it all right, but when our money is gone——

CHARLIE. Which will be about Wednesday.

MARIAN. Or sooner——

CHARLIE. Do you know, Marian, I really believe I shall be compelled to go to work?

MARIAN. (*rises*) You work! What could you do—what could we do?

CHARLIE. Or whom could we do—now, there's something in that.

MARIAN. Can't you be serious for a few minutes?

CHARLIE. Yes— (*stops suddenly*) No, I've got to kill a man by the name of Shaver. It's no use.

MARIAN. (*alarmed*) Don't say that—who is he —what is he?

CHARLIE. Don't you know who Shaver is?

MARIAN. No, dear.

CHARLIE. Well, it's too long a story, but it's a case of crepe on his door-knob or mine.

(*Enter* TILLY L. C.)

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TILLY. Your fader wants to see you about dose receptions.

MARIAN. I will go find the girls, as I said I would be here early. (*Exit* R. U. *to* R., *kissing hand to* CHARLIE)

CHARLIE. All right, Tilly, I'll go and see him, I suppose. (*Exit* L. 3)

TILLY. (*comes down* C.) I'm completely tired out mit dressing all dose people—they all got new dresses an' one wants to look better as de oder, and Mrs. Beekman-Streete's got so much powder on, she can't see her face through it. (*crosses up* C.)

(*Enter* ERASTUS *and* SHAVER, *arm in arm, from* R. C., ERASTUS *is smoking a very large cigar.*)

ERASTUS. (*on* SHAVER'S R.) You better remain here on view in the drawing-room. (*crosses up*—SHAVER L.—*To* TILLY) Tilly, you go downstairs and see Jennings, and tell him that when my guests come, he can tell 'em that the carriages may be ordered for 10:30. (*Exit* TILLY L. C.)

SHAVER. (L. C.) And the hearse at 10:31.

ERASTUS. (R. C.) To-night's the night—to-night's the night—I've been waiting for this for three long years, and I always knew I had a good thing in you.

SHAVER. But, I'm——

ERASTUS. (*interrupting*) There, there—that'll do. The only trouble's been that you've had too much liberty. (*looking at him very sternly*) I thought I had 'em yesterday—I saw everything double—and as for that uncle of yours, every time I look at him now, I see whole bunches of him. I'll keep my eye on you until after this reception is over. Then you can fly away to India or any old place you want to.

SHAVER. But suppose I'm a failure——

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ERASTUS. What, you—a failure—after what I've seen you do? (*shaking head and crossing to table* R.) Jamais la vie—not on your life. (*rings bell on table* R.) Here, have a smoke. (*taking out cigar*) Oh, I remember you don't smoke. (*puts cigar in other pocket.*)

(*Enter* JENNINGS C.)

Jennings, bring me a high ball of whiskey. (*exit* JENNINGS C. *to* L.) Tweedle, you ought to learn to smoke. (*sits in armchair* L. *of* R. *table*) There's lots of comfort in it. Sometimes I sit here and smoke and think—think of the days when I didn't want no society—ah, my gals was babies then. (*sighs and puffs cigar*) They're young ladies now. (SHAVER *sniffs cigar*)

(JENNINGS *enters, places whiskey and syphon on table, directly at* ERASTUS' *elbow. The whiskey and syphon are on silver tray, also large glass with piece of ice in it.* JENNINGS *pours out drink.*)

SHAVER. (*sniffing*) I'll bet that's a twenty center. (L. *of* ERASTUS)

ERASTUS. Thank you, Jennings—that'll do—just leave it. (*exit* JENNINGS. *Turning to* SHAVER) And, Tweedle, you ought to learn to drink too. Perhaps you will some day, when you get more accustomed to our ways. (*has drink in right hand, cigar in left*) Well, here's how! (*drops cigar by accident, puts whiskey glass down on tray and turns to lean over* L. *away from table to pick up cigar. At this moment* TILLY *enters* R. 1, *sees tray with glass and whiskey on it on table and, unobserved by either* SHAVER *or* ERASTUS, *takes same up and exits* C. ERASTUS, *in the meantime, has picked up cigar, dusted the end off with handkerchief, puffs and turns*

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*again to take up drink, discovers same gone, pantomime business, looking at* SHAVER) At it again—it's not right, Tweedle, I suppose I'll have to have my things nailed after this. (*rises*) Well, now, I'll take a run down to my kitchen and see how my chef's getting along with the supper. (*starts up* C.)

SHAVER. And I'll wait here. (*crosses* L. *goes and sits on sofa* L.)

ERASTUS. You'll do nothing of the kind. Do you think I'm going to let you out of my sight? I never know what you'll do next. (*leading him off* C.)

SHAVER. Let's postpone it.

ERASTUS. Postpone nothing—say, look here—I think you're trying to get out of this.

SHAVER. You do get the funniest ideas into your head.

ERASTUS. (*indicating where drink has been on table*) Yes, and you do get the funniest drinks into your head.

SHAVER. What I meant was this parading me around the crowd—they might suspect.

ERASTUS. Do you suppose I care what they think?

SHAVER. I feel another trance coming on—(*puts hand to head*)

ERASTUS. Don't have it now—I order you not to have it now.

SHAVER. Don't bring me to——

ERASTUS. To——? (*indicating table again*) You just had one—it was a corker! (*crosses up, takes* SHAVER *by the arm, walks around*) Don't have it now—keep it—save it until I have company then have it—and I'll pay you extra to run it off.

(*Exit with him* C. *to* R.)

(*Enter* CHARLIE L. 1.)

CHARLIE. If this thing keeps up, it will turn my

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hair to a silvery white. The best thing I can do is to pack my trunk and get out of here. I wouldn't care if the governor murdered him and it all leaked out—but I—I am the subject of the inquest. (*enter* TOM C. *from* L. *To* TOM) Tom, why in the name of time, didn't you tell me you were going to impersonate the real Tweedle?

TOM. (*down* C.) Well, I had those old clothes from that burlesque we played two years ago at college, and I thought by showing him up to my hope-to-be-very-soon-father, I would gain my point. I say, why didn't you tell me?

CHARLIE. (R.) Why didn't someone tell us? (*crosses to* R.) Well, Tom, it's too late now—this will be a skyrocket. (*he holds out hand.* TOM *rises and both shake*) Will you always keep a bunch of violets growing in my room?

TOM. (R. C.) Oh, pshaw! You will persist in giving up. Look at me—I have more to contend with than you have. I've been refused by your sister, kicked out by your father, but I am here. "Faint heart ne'er won fair lady," you know.

CHARLIE. (R.) But this is not a case of faint heart, nor fair lady. Tom, it's the rise and fall of a promising existence—especially the fall.

(*Enter* GERTIE C. *from* R.)

GERTIE. Oh boys—come here—(*beckons them and they come down on either side*) Promise me not to tell——

CHARLIE. Perhaps he's dead.

GERTIE. Auntie's in love with Mr. Tweedle. (*both boys turn away disgusted*) Oh, they've got it bad. She looks at him and sighs—(*sighs*) And he looks at her and sighs—then they look at each other and both sigh together.

TOM. Where were you?

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GERTIE. I went to get this flower. I'm going to sigh too.

TOM. Oho—in love?

GERTIE. Whole heart—can't eat—can't sleep—can't even think.

TOM. Aren't you too young?

GERTIE. Now, don't accuse me of that. That's what Auntie and Bernice say. To hear them talk, one would think youth was a crime.

CHARLIE. (R. C.) Who's the object of this great devotion?

GERTIE. (*makes big bow*) Your friend from India. (*both boys shocked.* CHARLIE *goes* C. *and takes* GERTIE'S *hand—kisses her* C.) But he doesn't care the least little bit for me.

TOM. (L. C.) You'd better think twice about it.

GERTIE. Twice? I think of it a hundred times a minute.

(*Enter* BERNICE R. 3 E.)

BERNICE. (*comes down* R. *of* GERTIE) Gertie, where is papa?

GERTIE. Why what's the matter?

BERNICE. Oh, nothing, only I wish to see him before our guests arrive. (TOM *goes to* BERNICE *and extends hand*)

TOM. Bernice——

BERNICE. Mr. Valentine—I am pleased to see you. I trust you will enjoy yourself at our reception this evening. (*crosses to* CHARLIE) Charlie, will you tell papa I wish to see him?

GERTIE. (*crosses to* R. *of* TOM. *To* TOM) It's awful, isn't it?

CHARLIE. I don't want to see papa, nor anybody else—I'm an exile from home.

(*Enter* MARIAN C. *from* L.)

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MARIAN. (C.) Well, girls, you see I'm here—and early, too.

BERNICE. I knew you wouldn't disappoint us. And you're going to introduce us to all your friends.

MARIAN. (*slightly shocked, Aside*) Friends! I never thought of that—I don't know a single one of them. (*aloud*) Why, certainly I am. (*crosses* L.)

(*Enter* ERASTUS C. *from* R.)

ERASTUS. (*comes down* R. C.) Well, gals, one hour more and we'll all be in it. My, my, how nice you do look. Dressed up to the nines, too. Here, Gert, give your pop a kiss. (GERTIE *crosses to him. He kisses her. Turning to* BERNICE) Bernice, salute your father. Ah, Miss Hayste, too. (*crosses to her, shakes hands with her*)

MARIAN. Why, Mr. Underholt.

ERASTUS. Look out for her, gals—she's a rival.

MARIAN. Do you like it?

ERASTUS. If I had more here—(*indicating bald head*) and less here—(*indicates stomach*) I'd set my cap for you myself.

MARIAN. It's from Worth, you know. Is it a good fit? (*turning round*)

ERASTUS. Oh, dear me, yes. (*aside, looking at her back*) If it was any more of a fit, it would be a convulsion. (*aloud*) Now, gals, you must tell your old Pop what he's got to do. First, we've got Tweedle, the wizard; he'll do his tricks, and Señor Spaghetti is engaged to sing—what's the rest of the programme?

BERNICE. (*in a marked manner*) The rest of the program?

GERTIE. (R. C.—*slightly toward him—interrupting*) The rest of the programme is—well, first, you must receive the guests.

ERASTUS. (*with hand on breast, making absurd bow*) Oh, that's easy.

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MARIAN. And at twelve o'clock, lead the German.

ERASTUS. (*in amazement*) Who, Tilly? (*all shocked and walk up stage, except* GERTIE) What German?

GERTIE. (*whispering in his ear*) Why, Pop, the German's a dance.

BERNICE. He'll spoil it all. (*girls up* C.)

GERTIE. Well, never mind.

ERASTUS. I can't see myself in that—Charlie. (*who is* L. *and* R. *of* MARIAN) Boy, you'll have to help me out, or else you—(*he turns suddenly, sees* TOM *who is down* L. *of* BERNICE, *gets very angry*) I thought I told you never to come in my house again?

TOM. (R. C.) You did, but I've drawn cards and I'll be in at the call, if I go broke.

ERASTUS. (C.) Well, you have got the—All right, young fellow, I'll fly a flag of truce with you to-night —but to-morrow morning we'll have a fresh deal all around.

CHARLIE. And I won't be ace high.

GERTIE. (*comes to* ERASTUS C. *on his* R.) Oh, Papa, dear, where's Mr. Tweedle?

ERASTUS. (*throwing hands in the air*) Holy ginger! I bet he's having that trance in the hall. I'll stop that.

(*Exit* C. *to* R. GERTIE *has followed him up* C. *looks off after him.* TOM *and* BERNICE R. C. *and* CHARLIE *and* MARIAN L. C. ALL *talk privately*)

TOM. (*to* BERNICE) Now, I've been given half a chance; won't you give me one opportunity to improve it?

BERNICE. Until our other guests arrive, yes. After that, we meet only as friends. (BERNICE *turns to* CHARLIE) Ah, Charlie, we have you to thank for all this to-night. It was you who brought Mr. Tweedle here.

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CHARLIE. Yes, I am to blame for it all.

(*Enter* MRS. B. S., C. *from* L., *to* C. ALL *ad lib.*)

MRS. B. S. (GERTIE *comes down to her* R.) Well, girls, once more—third time.

ALL. What?

MRS. B. S. (C.) In love. I want you all to stand up with me.

CHARLIE. (L. C.) Who is the victim?

MRS. B. S. (C.) We are speaking of a wedding, not an execution.

CHARLIE. (L. C.) Same thing.

MARIAN. (L.) And yet, isn't it funny how many men are willing to become matrimonial martyrs.

GERTIE. Can I really stand up with you, Auntie?

MRS. B. S. Yes, and Bernice too.

BERNICE. (*bus.*) Is it really serious, Aunt?

MRS. B. S. Do you know he proposed so suddenly to me yesterday it completely unnerved me and I frightened him away, so I had to begin all over again. But I'll win him—I can almost scent the orange blossoms now.

BERNICE. Well, it would be a novelty, Auntie?

MRS. B. S. Not to me—very simple. You drive up in a carriage, jump gaily down to the walk, up the steps, stop a few moments at the church door, shed a few tears, up the aisle—and you meet him.

GERTIE. What him?

MRS. B. S. There's only one him at a wedding. (*goes* C. *Pantomime bus. by* MRS. B. S. *of a marriage ceremony, as she puts her hand out for the supposed ring*)

CHARLIE. I do.

MRS. B. S. Thanks. (*continues pantomime as if bridegroom had forgotten ring in vest pocket. Fumbles, finds it, completes pantomime. Turn—walks up* C. *all characters on stage hum in unison*

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*first strain of wedding march.* MRS. B. S. *turns and comes down* C.)

CHARLIE. Then hire a detective and get evidence. (*all shocked*)

MRS. B. S. A short honeymoon trip, then "Two souls with but a single thought, two hearts that beat as one."

GERTIE. Which one?

MRS. B. S. With me, mine.

BERNICE. (R. C.) Quite right, Auntie; the wife should be the queen.

CHARLIE. (L. C.) That's it, Marian; a woman is always at the bottom of every—(*breaks speech*)

MARIAN. (L.) There, there, Charlie—it is barely possible when a man is at the top of the ladder, a woman may be at the bottom of it?

CHARLIE. Yes, just to pull it from under him.

TWEEDLE. (*outside*) Never mind, I'll find him.

MRS. B. S. That voice! Be still. (*puts her hand to her heart. Sits* L.)

TWEEDLE. (*outside*) I'll look in here—ah, there she is.

(*Enter* TWEEDLE. *Crosses* C., R. *of* MRS. B. S. *Other characters with the exception of* MRS. B. S. *have hidden either side of stage. As he comes down, they hum strain of wedding march as before and exit* C. *to* R. *in single file, keeping step, still humming strain.*)

MRS. B. S. That tune ought—Great Heavens! They've stopped. (*turns to* TWEEDLE) Oh, Mr. Tweedle, don't you adore music? It charms me.

TWEEDLE. (R. C.) It does indeed have charms to soothe the savage beast.

MRS. B. S. (L. C.) What?

TWEEDLE. That is, when played in a jungle. But in civilized countries, it does draw souls closer together.

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MRS. B. S. It's coming. A few more bars of that music would fetch him.

TWEEDLE. Mrs. Streete—Arabella—may I call you Arabella?

MRS. B. S. (L.) He does mean business.

TWEEDLE. (L. C.) May I?

MRS. B. S. Yes, James. (*both sit on sofa, she on his* L.)

TWEEDLE. That affair of yesterday——

MRS. B. S. Oh, don't mention it——

TWEEDLE. It must have been my love for you that turned my head.

MRS. B. S. Well, I was cross, too.

TWEEDLE. You are so forgiving. Do you know, I was thinking of your lonely condition, and of mine, and as misery loves company——

MRS. B. S. (*starts quickly*) Misery! (*about to rise—he stops her*)

TWEEDLE. I didn't mean that! Mrs. Streete—Arabella—I can no longer keep my secret—(*drops on one knee*)

(*Enter* GERTIE C. *from* R.)

GERTIE. (R.) Am I in the way?

MRS. B. S. (*crosses* C.—*aside*) So near and yet so far! (*aloud*) Oh, no, not at all. Mr. Tweedle was just telling me——

GERTIE. (R.) About the heathen?

TWEEDLE. Yes, yes; we were talking about the heathen.

MRS. B. S. Mr. Tweedle, you were talking about—(*noise outside*)

(*Enter* SHAVER R. C. *running.* TWEEDLE *goes up* L. *and works around up* R. C.)

GERTIE. (R.) What's the matter?

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SHAVER. (C.) It is the cook.

GERTIE. (C.) What's he doing?

SHAVER. (R. C.) He's doing your father.

MRS. B. S. (L. C.) Perhaps you are not accustomed to large receptions, as ours will be to-night.

SHAVER. No, they're like funerals. A man only thoroughly enjoys them once a lifetime. (*up* C., *looks off* R. *and* L., *then comes down to piano* L.)

GERTIE. Pop ain't stuck on it either. He's only done it for us girls.

MRS. B. S. (L. C.) Erastus does look like a fish out of water in a dress suit.

GERTIE. (*to* SHAVER) I wish they'd get out. (*to* MRS. *B. S.*) Auntie, why don't you and Mr. Tweedle, Sr., go into the conservatory? I'm sure you will enjoy the palms. Is it all fixed?

MRS. B. S. (*crosses to her*) No, you came in a minute too soon.

TWEEDLE. (*aside*) I'll make another attempt.

MRS. B. S. (*to* GERTIE) Now, just play a bar or two as we pass. (GERTIE *crosses* L.)

TWEEDLE. (*coming down* R. *of* MRS. B. S.) Shall we? (*offer* L. *arm*)

MRS. B. S. Certainly, certainly, if you insist. (*beckons to* GERTIE—GERTIE *plays wedding march on piano.* TWEEDLE *and* MRS. B. S. *cross to* R. C.)

MRS. B. S. Isn't that a lovely air?

TWEEDLE. Yes, what is it?

MRS. B. S. It's an old favorite of mine. (*both exit* R. C.)

GERTIE. (*sitting on piano stool, turns around*) She's in love with him.

SHAVER. (*leaning against piano stool*) She can have him. She saw him first. I had my fingers crossed.

GERTIE. Has he attained Nirvana?

SHAVER. No, but he will if he gets her.

GERTIE. (*seated on piano stool*) Well, tell me—

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when one has attained Nirvana, can one see all his previous existences?

SHAVER. All!

GERTIE. (L. C.) Well, tell me all the lives you have lived, and the different forms you have taken.

SHAVER. (R. C.) Well, you see, I have lived so many lives that I——

GERTIE. Well, tell me the very first that you can remember.

SHAVER. You wouldn't believe me.

GERTIE. Not believe you! Why?

SHAVER. Tell me—did you ever feel a sort of longing, yearning, here? (*bus.*)

GERTIE. Before meal times, yes.

SHAVER. No, not that! (*both come down* C.) Listen! Two thousand years ago I was a bird.

GERTIE. (L. C.) Oh, yes, I heard Charlie tell Tom Valentine that you were a cuckoo.

SHAVER. (R. C.) A cuckoo? No; I was a sacred white Ibis, on the banks of the Nile, and you were my mate.

GERTIE. Your first mate?

SHAVER. My first and only mate. Try and think, can't you? Black top-knots on our heads——? (GERTIE *shakes head. Enter* TILLY, *stands back* C. *Continuing*) And long, and very slender legs. Are you thinking.

GERTIE. Yes, I'm thinking awfully hard. But it's too far back, I guess.

SHAVER. When you have attained Nirvana, you will see all distinctly. Those were peaceful, happy days.

GERTIE. (*seriously, as if his talk had convinced her*) Do you know, I can stand for the longest time on one foot.

SHAVER. I knew it—you are mine. You feel the affinity, don't you?

GERTIE. Well, just a little. (*crosses* R. *demurely*)

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SHAVER. Well, the rest will come in time.

GERTIE. Don't think that I'm trying to rob you of your spiritual love.

SHAVER. Oh, well, I have Tuesdays and Saturdays to myself exclusively.

GERTIE. Oh have you? Well, may I have those days?

SHAVER. Yes, and if I can secure a spiritual divorce, you may have the others.

GERTIE. Oh, you are so kind.

SHAVER. You would be my angel wife.

GERTIE. Would you build the fires?

SHAVER. Figuratively speaking, yes!

GERTIE. No, I won't be so mean—I'll help. I'll pour on the kerosene.

SHAVER. Then you would be my angel wife!

GERTIE. Now, remember, you're mine. I'll go and tell Auntie, and make her jealous.

(*Exit* R. 2 *humming wedding march. Bus. of* TILLY. *Stands up stage on one foot. When* SHAVER *hears* ERASTUS *he assumes bird attitude on one foot, also down* L.)

(ERASTUS *enters* R. C. *with* TILLY, *sees* SHAVER.)

ERASTUS. At it again! I knew it. Will you come out of there? (*walks him to* C.) Haven't I got trouble enough now? Stop it, I tell you. My chef chasing me out of my own kitchen. But here, you're a wizard—what with you and this—(*taking up seltzer bottle and leading* SHAVER *by arm*) I think I can drown that French prize-fighter out. I will try anyway. Do you know he is going to sue me? But he will lose his suit.

SHAVER. If he loses it here, he'll never find it.

(*Exit both* R. C.)

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TILLY. I wonder where is my affinity? (*stands on one foot, burlesque imitation of previous scene between* SHAVER *and* GERTIE. *Enter* JENNINGS L. C. *Looks at her in amazement*)

JENNINGS. What's the matter? Is one broke? (TILLY *leading him* C.)

TILLY. (R. C. *in mysterious manner*) Two thousand years ago, I am a geese.

JENNINGS. (L. C.) Well, you're not far from one now.

TILLY. Who, you?

JENNINGS. Yes—no! I'm no goose!

TILLY. And all day long I stand in de water on one foot—(*stands on one foot.* JENNINGS *imitates*)

JENNINGS. That's easy.

TILLY. Und blink at de sun, like dot—(*blinks*) and finity got my soul.

JENNINGS. Finnerty, is it? I knew that Irish Policeman would get ahead of me. (*goes up* C.) I'll lay for him when he comes on the beat, and he'll answer the roll-call in the morning with only one eye.

(*Exit* C. *to* L.)

TILLY. It don't work.

(ERASTUS *Enters* C.)

ERASTUS. I've lost him again. He's escaped me. (*seeing* TILLY, *who has made a dash for* C.) Here, you. (*takes her by the arm*) For the first time since I've owned you, I want you. Now, here, you're German. We're going to dance it to-night, and I want you to teach it to me.

TILLY. (*grinning*) Dance, why dot's easy. I'd do anything for you!

ERASTUS. Well, how does it go? (TILLY *hums German dance and dances.* ERASTUS *imitates her*)

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(*Enter* BERNICE R. 3 E.)

BERNICE. Why, papa!

ERASTUS. (C.) Don't bother me; I'm learning the German. (*continues dancing*)

BERNICE. (R. C.) And with the servant, too!

(*Enter* MRS. B. S. R. 1 E. *with two photographs.*)

MRS. B. S. Why, Erastus!

ERASTUS. Don't bother me, I'm happy.

MRS. B. S. (*crosses* R. C. *coming down* C. *alongside of* ERASTUS) Happy? So am I—I fetched him!

ERASTUS. Fetched who?

MRS. B. S. Why, James. He was game, though; I had to let him out, and wind him in, but I landed him, and he's waiting for me now. I just went to my room to get the pictures of No. 1 and No. 2. (*with affected feeling*) Poor, dear men! How glad they will be when they know I'm happy. Here, Erastus—(*handing photographs*) You take them—take care of them.

ERASTUS. Take care of them! I always had to, when they were alive.

MRS. B. S. Well, it's all for the best, Erastus. And now, I'll go and join No. 3.

(*Exit* R. C.)

ERASTUS. (*remains* L.) Run along, Tilly. From this on, your wages are raised five per.

BERNICE. (*coming down* R. *of* TILLY) Go to my room and fetch the list of guests. I wish to become familiar with their names.

TILLY. I fetch them right away, mum. (*to* ERASTUS) Don't you forget dot turn. (*she dances.* ERASTUS *imitates her*)

ERASTUS. I've got that down fine. (TILLY *exits.*

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ERASTUS *comes down stage*) Well, dear, to-night makes or breaks us—and all for my dear little girls.

BERNICE. (R. C. *aside*) I must tell him. (*aloud*) Papa—darling papa.

ERASTUS. (C.) Oh, this is a touch. How much? (*putting hand in pocket*)

BERNICE. No, not this time. Now, papa, you have no personal interest in society, have you?

ERASTUS. (R. C.) Not the slightest.

BERNICE. You have done it all for us?

ERASTUS. Yes, and I'll do more.

BERNICE. And as the guests that are coming to-night will only care to talk of Theosophy, and as you know nothing about it——

ERASTUS. Want to cut me out, eh—is that it? Just as I learned to dance the German, too. (*crosses* L.)

BERNICE. (R. C.) Wouldn't you like it? I think I can make all necessary excuses.

ERASTUS. (L. C.) Afraid I'll get mixed up in the conversation—is that it?

BERNICE. I think I can arrange all that for you—and you can sit in the library all by yourself with no one to disturb you. And in the morning— (*crosses to* R.) I'll tell you all about it.

(*Exit* R. U.)

ERASTUS. That'll be nice. (*strikes attitude at end of sofa* L.) Ashamed of me! That's about the size of it! Ashamed of her own father! I'm darned if I can see what for—(*crossing to table and striking bell*) This society racket ain't what it's cracked up to be, at all, at all. Come, Underholt, it's your own fault; you brought the horse to the water and now you're mad because it wants to drink. Talking about drinks, I think I'll have one. (*enter* JENNINGS) Jennings, bring me a high ball of whiskey. (JENNINGS *turns to exit.* ERASTUS *stops him*) And—

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Jennings, this time you put it right in my hand. I'm not going to take chances. (*exit* JENNINGS. ERASTUS *crosses to end of sofa*) After all I've done for them too. Brought them here to New York, put them in this fine house, got up this reception, discovered Sweedles; for two pins, I'd sell out the whole business and go back to Kansas City. (*enter* JENNINGS *with whiskey*) Thank you, Jennings. You may go. (JENNINGS *exits.* ERASTUS *bus. with glass*) Well, Tweedles got me into this, and he's got to get me out. (SHAVER *enters noiselessly.* ERASTUS *starts on seeing him*) See here, wizard or no wizard, you've got to wear creaky boots, or something. You come in and go out like a shadow.

SHAVER. (C.) I have been with the spirits.

ERASTUS. (R. *suddenly grasping glass from table, where he has left it*) Well, you'll not be with these spirits, I can tell you that. (*gulps down drink*) Sweedles, what do you think? My daughter—my own daughter is ashamed of me.

SHAVER. Well, I don't blame her.

ERASTUS. What?

SHAVER. That is, if you are going to keep up drinking all the time.

ERASTUS. I never drink. (*drinks*)

SHAVER. Why don't you?

ERASTUS. See here, Sweedles, I'm in this business with both feet. I want to pull out of it. I'm sick of it. Now, you're a wizard—you can help me. You fix it, and I'll give you a check for a thousand dollars.

SHAVER. On the dead?

ERASTUS. No, on my bank.

SHAVER. I'll go you. (*crosses* L.)

ERASTUS. You keep your word now, and you'll never regret it. It will be good business.

(*Exit* C. *with glass in hand.*)

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SHAVER. Now, to gain my liberty and get even with the inebriate son.

(*Enter* TOM C. *from* L.)

TOM. Mr. Tweedle, can I see you for a moment?

SHAVER. (R. C.) Yes, and you'll have to do it quickly; I don't expect to last much longer.

TOM. (C.) I wish to marry in the Underholt family. I tried to antagonize you and failed; and now I want to ask your assistance. But not for nothing. I love Miss Bernice, and if you can convince her that I am the only affinity her soul can ever find, I'll give you a check for a thousand dollars.

SHAVER. It's a bargain—shake! (*they shake hands.* TOM *goes* R.)

TOM. Is it possible that Charlie's been stringing me, and this is the real thing after all? I can depend on you?

SHAVER. A thousand dollars' worth—no more. (*exit* TOM R. U. E.) If this keeps up, I'll have a mortgage on Underholt's life. (*enter* BERNICE R. U. E.) Miss Underholt, I was just thinking of you.

BERNICE. Of me?

SHAVER. (L. C.) Yes. The spirits have told me that you desired your father to be absent from the reception to-night, and the guests will think that he has purposely avoided them. It's too bad.

BERNICE. (C. *surprised*) Well, I never thought of that. I will have papa here—never fear.

SHAVER. And another thing—I was just speaking to Mr. Valentine, your affinity—and he told me he loved another.

BERNICE. Loved another? Why, who?

SHAVER. I don't know. Some society belle, I presume.

BERNICE. (*aside*) Oh, well, I'll spoil her little game at the first opportunity? (*to* SHAVER) I'll remember all you have said, Mr. Tweedle.

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SHAVER. It's never too late to mend. (*Enter* MRS. B. S. R. C. *To* MRS. B. S.) Where is he?

MRS. B. S. (C.) He, who?

SHAVER. My uncle—you are drifting apart. Your souls have been one since the beginning. Find him quick and clasp him fast. Don't delay, but do it! (*business. Exit* L. C.)

MRS. B. S. Bernice, that man comes straight from Heaven. I have but to obey.

(*Exit* R. C.)

BERNICE. Tom Valentine in love with another! Well, he'll marry me, I'll wager. Now, let me see—first to have papa here at the reception and then to put that society lady's nose out of joint!

(*Exit* C. *to* R.)

(*Enter* SHAVER L. C.)

SHAVER. Well, if the recording angel was ever busy before, my account will give him writer's cramp.

(*Enter* MARIAN C. *Sees* SHAVER.)

MARIAN. Ah, Mr. Tweedle, have you ever loved?

SHAVER. Many times—that is, on different planes, but always with the same soul.

MARIAN. (C.) Then you can help me. I love—I love deeply.

SHAVER. (L. C.) Who is the object of this love?

MARIAN. Charlie Underholt.

SHAVER. That drunkard!

MARIAN. Don't say that, Mr. Tweedle. Do you know he is in great trouble? He's going to kill a man by the name of Shaver. (*crosses* R.)

SHAVER. (*very much surprised*) Is he?

MARIAN. Promise me you won't let him.

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SHAVER. I'll do all I can to prevent it.

MARIAN. I don't know what it is all about, but I know it stands between us and if I could only remove this obstacle.

SHAVER. I've been trying to remove this obstacle for several days.

MARIAN. (R.) Well, try harder, and I'll give you a check for a thousand dollars.

SHAVER. (R. C. *Aside*) I wish somebody'd give me twenty-five cents in cash! This thousand dollar business is getting monotonous.

MARIAN. Then there'll be no murder?

SHAVER. Not as long as I live.

(*Enter* CHARLIE C. *from* R.)

MARIAN. There he is—tell him now.

SHAVER. (*runs around table*) Excuse me—I'm Shaver.

MARIAN. (R. C.) You, Shaver!

SHAVER. (R. *of table* R.) Yes, me.

CHARLIE. (L. C.) Yes, Marian, the jig's up. Can't you see what a horrible muddle I've made of everything? Can you ever forgive me, dear?

MARIAN. (*a little surprised*) Yes, and perhaps help you out, too.

SHAVER. (*sitting on edge of table*) Don't waste all your sympathy on him. I'm sitting at the point of death myself.

MARIAN. I gave your father the list of guests, consequently I know them all. We'll send word to them that the reception is off.

SHAVER. (R. *of table* R.) I have it—I will write them—(*starts to write on table*) that everyone is sick, reception postponed until after the inquest.

CHARLIE. Oh, that'll never do. Half of them are on their way here now. I'll tell you—you sit on the front door step and head them off.

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SHAVER. What? In my pajamas? You want to see me down with pneumonia.

CHARLIE. (L.) Now, don't argue with me.

MARIAN. (C.) There, there! Stop that wrangling. The time is here for action.

SHAVER. (R.) And I'll get the action.

CHARLIE. It's all hopeless. (*goes* L.)

MARIAN. Never mind, Charlie—sink or swim, I'll be with you.

(*Enter* TILLY, R. C. *with apron full of envelopes.*)

MARIAN. Tilly, wait a minute.

TILLY. I can't do it—I'm two days late now.

MARIAN. With what?

TILLY. The invitations for the reception. I forgot to mail them. I'll do it now.

(CHARLIE, MARIAN *and* SHAVER, *with exclamations, rush for* TILLY. *In the struggle, she drops invitations on floor. They gather them up and hide them under pillows of sofa, in vases and various parts of the room.*)

TILLY. (C.) I'll bet I'll lose my place.

SHAVER. You can have mine. (TILLY *exits* C. *to* R.)

TILLY. (*as she exits*) I don't want it.

CHARLIE. How are we going to square this with the Governor?

MARIAN. (*coming* C.) Mr. Tweedle, tell him he's in a trance.

SHAVER. I've been trying to tell him that ever since I've been here. (MARIAN *goes up* C., *calls off to* TILLY)

MARIAN. Tilly, tell Mr. Underholt that Mr. Shaver—I mean Mr. Tweedle—wants to see him here at once.

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CHARLIE. (L. *to* SHAVER) Now, here's a chance to distinguish yourself.

SHAVER. Extinguish is more like it. He may stand for a jag, but I'm afraid of the trance.

MARIAN. (*coming* C.) Jag—that's it. You make him believe that he's intoxicated.

(*Enter* TOM *and* BERNICE R. 3 E.)

TOM. (*to* SHAVER *who is* R. *of table*) You get the thousand. (*bus. of* SHAVER *handing* TOM *pen and* TOM *writing check, sitting* L. *of table* R.)

MARIAN. (L. C.) What?

BERNICE. (R. C.) Yes, we agreed to be the best of friends. Didn't we, Tom?

TOM. Always!

BERNICE. But what's the use? I'm afraid papa won't give his consent.

MARIAN. Why?

BERNICE. Because I asked papa not to be present at our reception, to-night. This reception—Oh! I wish it wasn't going to take place.

(*Enter* GERTIE C. *door.*)

GERTIE. What's the matter?

MARIAN. We may as well be frank; we're all in it together. The reception is off. (GERTIE *and* BERNICE *very much surprised and say "What!"* TOM *and* SHAVER *rise*) Yes, Tilly forgot to mail the invitations, and Mr. Tweedle is going to pretend to put your father in a trance and make him believe he countermanded the invitations himself.

TOM. (*walks to* BERNICE) If it works, I'll make him believe he gave us his consent before he sobered up.

GERTIE. How are you going to do it?

CHARLIE. All hide, and when we see him come

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in, we'll all come out one by one and make him believe he's intoxicated beyond redemption.

SHAVER. That's right. (*as they all start to exit,* SHAVER *gets frightened*) Don't leave me alone with him. You'll all help?

ALL. Yes.

GERTIE. I'm glad of the chance. I'd rather play with Pop than anybody I know. Besides he doesn't have much fun.

SHAVER. Well, he will in a minute.

ERASTUS. (*outside*) Very well, Tilly, I'll go up to him. (*entering*) Oh, there you are Tweedles. Do you think you can fix it? (*noticing* SHAVER'S *assumed trance*) Oh, don't do that—please don't do it again.

SHAVER. Just a short one. (SHAVER *pretends to put* ERASTUS *in a trance, otherwise hypnotize him. Burlesque.* ERASTUS *resents this*) You've been drinking again—you have been drinking again. You are in a horrible state of intoxication. (*gliding backwards to door*) And so you'll remain until I remove this spell.

(*Exit* C. *to* R.)

ERASTUS. Ha! (*half amused and somewhat annoyed*) What silly nonsense.

(*Enter* CHARLIE L. 2.)

CHARLIE. Well, father, we're all ready for the reception. (*assumes a start, looks reproachfully at his father*) Oh, father!

ERASTUS. (*looking at him in astonishment*) Well, what's the matter with you?

CHARLIE. (L. C.) After all the lectures you've given me—it isn't the duty of a son to upbraid his own father, but stop it—stop it, before it is too late.

(*Exits* L. 2.)

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ERASTUS. (*with suppressed anger*) Well, I'll be—

(*Enter* BERNICE R. 3.)

BERNICE. (*coming close to* ERASTUS) Oh, papa, now about the— (*stops with her arms about* ERASTUS' *neck, sniffs as if smelling his breath, bursts into tears*) Oh, papa, you've been drinking again—and my own father, too!

(*Exits crying* R. 2 E. ERASTUS *looks after her with a half frightened expression.*)

(*Enter* MARIAN L. 2. *Goes to* ERASTUS.)

MARIAN. Mr. Underholt, may I see you? (*suddenly looks horrified*)

ERASTUS. (*answering the look expressively*) Well, what's the matter with you?

MARIAN. (*bursting into tears—between her sobs*) I feel so sorry for those poor girls.

(*Exits* L. 2 E.)

(ERASTUS *turns, thoroughly frightened and dismayed. Puts hand on head, studies for a moment and then walks chalk line down stage to chair as* GERTIE *enters* R. 3 E.)

GERTIE. Say, Pop—(*stops*)

ERASTUS. Now, Gert, don't say it.

GERTIE. (*crying*) Oh, Pop—never mind, though —I love you, if you are full.

(*Exits* R. 1. ERASTUS *is thoroughly convinced that he is intoxicated. Assumes, gradually, a tipsy air.*)

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ERASTUS. I can feel it now. I was loaded and I didn't know it. (*gets drunker with each sentence*) I'm loaded to the guards. (*business*) Well, Sweedles loaded me up—he'll have to unload me. (*turns* C., *back to audience and has very drunken exit* C. *to* L.)

(ALL *characters enter and laugh at success of the plot.*)

BERNICE. It worked beautifully.

CHARLIE. (*suddenly stops laughing*) Now, listen, when he comes in again, make him think he gave his consent to all our marriages, and that he countermanded the invitations to the reception himself.

ERASTUS. (*outside*) Sweedles, you made me loaded—unload me—sober me up.

SHAVER. (*entering*) I pronounce you sober as a judge.

ERASTUS. (*enters following* SHAVER *in a thoroughly frightened manner*) Is that right?

CHARLIE. Father, you're going to be awful proud of us?

MARIAN. And never regret giving your consent.

ERASTUS. Consent! (*looks at* SHAVER) Did I?

SHAVER. (*nods*) Yes.

TOM. I thank you, too, Pop. I will cherish her all my life.

ERASTUS. Pop! What? (*pantomime business with* SHAVER. *Enter at back* MRS. B. S. *on the arm of* JAMES TWEEDLE) Don't say it—don't say it. Bless you, my children. (*turn to* SHAVER) But not Gert?

GERTIE. (*coming to him*) No, Pop. I'm yours yet.

ERASTUS. Why didn't you wait till the reception was over?

ALL. Reception?

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BERNICE. There's to be no reception.

ERASTUS. What, no reception? (*to* SHAVER) You did that!

SHAVER. No, you did it yourself. You countermanded the invitations.

ERASTUS. When I was loaded? And you loaded me! Thank you, thank you. All right, Bernice, you can have the house. Charlie, draw on me for your living expenses. (*looking over to* MRS. B. S.) Yes, I'll take care of No. 3. (*to* SHAVER) I wouldn't lose you; you're a good thing. And Gert—you and me—we'll go back home. Home, to Kansas City.

(*Enter* TILLY R. 1.)

TILLY. Who said Kansas City? (*music. Crosses center in front and goes up, followed by* ERASTUS)

ERASTUS. Will you get out?

CURTAIN

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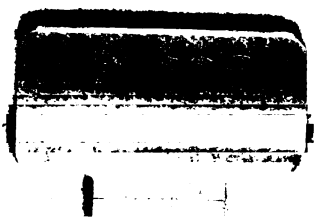

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